DEMONIC POSSESSION
& LIVED RELIGION
IN LATER MEDIEVAL EUROPE

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Preface

The seeds for this project were sown years ago when I was a doctoral student and first came across miracles involving demonic possession. They caught my attention as intriguing and even amusing anecdotes. My first impression was that the details, such as the shameful songs and stones thrown, were expressions of quite straightforward frustration, even infuriation. Soon enough I learned that at stake were much more than fits of anger; some of these people were likely to have been severely ill as they had died soon afterward. Into the same category were placed various kinds of afflictions, some of which seemed mild enough. Furthermore, the exact same symptoms could have been labelled differently in different collections. Nothing was straightforward, I found out.

The only constant feature that remained was the happy ending all these cases had; in the end, the saints' miraculous powers drove away the malign forces and restored peace and harmony. The inevitable positive outcome (a sine qua non) of a miracle narration is something I have learned to value after long discussions with colleagues working with other kinds of judicial material. When it comes to miracles, whether they were recorded in a canonization process or in a miracle collection, things may get a bit rough along the way, but in the end all will be fine; nobody gets burned or otherwise lastingly punished, and even sinners are given an opportunity to repent. As the reading of the chosen source material essentially guides the historian's perceptions of the past, as a form of self-evaluation I ponder if and how this positive outcome has, at least subconsciously, affected my analysis of the phenomenon. On occasion, my argumentation differs from other scholars of the field. I tend to see collaboration where some other scholars see subjugation, and joint efforts for cure where others argue for joint methods of punishment.

I have always been more interested in the fractures and divergences within dominant discussions than in arguing for fixed categories or the uniform and uncomplicated evolution of a phenomenon. This resonates with and is encouraged by the chosen sources, since another invaluable feature of miracle narrations is their richness. They offer an opportunity to study phenomena and people's lives which are rarely found in other kinds of texts and their capacity to provide information will not be easily exhausted. Needless to say, care and skill are needed when tackling this treasure trove in order to understand what they are really about, as miracle narrations are so much more than entertaining anecdotes. I view the increasing popularity of this material with both pleasure and caution. Due diligence is needed when miracles are used as source material. Therefore,

I found it important to also include explicit comments on the sources and methodology within the text.

Yet another thing I have learned as this process matured was the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of demonic possession; it was connected to so many things in the culture and society of the Middle Ages that practically anything could be studied from the perspective of demonic presence. Daily life, gender, sexuality, identity, disability, spirituality, and politics, for example, stand out in the narrations. They were all major components in the construction of medieval culture and are major themes in current historiography. Indeed, I had a hard time choosing the major themes and structuring the argumentation of this book. The most important of all options for my approach, however, was religion as lived practice. It provided the link between the various themes of this book. For the current volume 'lived religion' is both a thematic approach and a methodology. I thank the external readers for their thoughtful comments and competent guidance on these matters. Thanks to their comments, the richness of the cases and detailed narrations is hopefully more accessible to readers.

grateful for his competence and endurance. It may well have been that malign forces exerted their baleful influence on the text I had formulated (as he suspected); nevertheless, and despite his help and that of all the others mentioned above, all remaining mistakes are my own.

Finally, I want to give my thanks to my nearest and dearest. In a family of two working parents and two teenagers, proper order has sometimes been lost, behaviour inappropriate, and emotions excessive. Communal negotiations have indeed been needed to sort out the situation and various methods to exculpate oneself have been tried. Miracle or not, peace and harmony have always been restored in our home. I wish to express my love and thanks to Ari, Otto, and Sanni.

A technical note—saints and other otherwise well-known persons are referred to by the generally used English version of their name throughout the text. For the witnesses, on the other hand, the version of the name that is found in the sources (usually in Latin) is used. All transcripts of manuscripts and translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. The King James version is used for Biblical quotations.

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Introduction

Demons in Daily Life—Lived Religion and Devotional Strategies

'Demons exist, they are many, they are evil and they infest people.'[1] This is how Caesar of Heisterbach defined the nature of malevolent supernatural forces around 1220. This book follows the lead of Caesar and investigates the ways demons infested people; it deals with the reasons, symptoms, and means of coping with the situation; with the very interpretation of demonic presence in daily life. Demons were part of God's creation and important actors in medieval cosmology. The struggle of saints and demons as well as the polar nature of the sacred and the diabolical were crucial components within medieval culture. Although demons had a generally acknowledged role in God's plan, their disruptive nature was evident: demonic presence was a threat to the salvation of Christians and a disturbance of proper order in a spiritual and social sense. Demons could entice people to sin or possess their bodies violently; some desperate or wicked souls even engaged with them voluntarily.

Demonic possession was a spiritual phenomenon which had visible and detectable physical and mental symptoms as well as social outcomes. Essentially, the demoniacs were out of their minds. They had fits and convulsions. They could tremble or lose the ability to use their senses or body parts. They rolled their eyes, could not stand still, and shrieked mindlessly. They could be violent and verbally abusive, and some blasphemed God and the saints and showed an abhorrence of all things sacred. In all, the situation was an affliction, especially for the victim him- or herself, but it was not only an individual misfortune. Demonic possession could cause chaos and disorder in the whole community, hence offering a way to comprehend its social dynamics. Demonic possession was a way to explain often otherwise inexplicable misfortunes: mental disorder, incomprehensible physical symptoms, or unacceptable behaviour. There were no unmistakable signs for demonic presence, so a diagnosis of this sort was always a result of communal negotiation. Religion, the framework it offered as an institution and set of doctrines, and particularly its devotional practices opened for the participants a way to

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[1] 'De eo quod demones sint, quod multi sint, quod mali sint et quod hominibus infesti.' Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. by Joseph Strange (Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Press Inc., 1966 [1851]), V, 1.

comprehend, explain, and cope with situations of this sort. It gave meaning to people's experiences.

Religion is here approached as a lived practice, and 'lived religion' is the primary frame of analysis. Theological ponderings on, for example, the Devil, and elite teaching on demonic powers as well as political relations in the cult of saints, are seen as inseparable background elements. The focus is, however, on explaining, identifying, and solving problems in daily life by means of religion. Lived religion is understood as a social process, a way to live, interact, and participate in one's community. It is formed in and by the core of communal life where ideas and religious concepts are experienced. Religion-as-lived created a space for action, enabling independent initiative.[2]

The book will concentrate on lay people's participation and experiences. Religion-as-lived offered a performative space to construct social positions, display identity, and create communal cohesion. For individuals it was a creative space, though not wholly subjective but constructed in concert with others. Lived religion was essentially a social phenomenon, built upon learnt practices, shared meanings, and joint experiences. In this process rituals, symbols, gestures, and narrations were important in order to make religious experiences comprehensible, even tangible and present to the senses. Religion-as-lived was not a stable system but a fluid and multilayered practice. Such a view follows the arguments of sociologists of modern religion about 'religion-in-action' being based on what people actually do, desire, imagine, touch, and share. Individual experiences within the sociocultural milieu (here family, community, and cultic community) form the core element: religion-as-lived is a way to turn values, norms, attitudes, and narrations into everyday social actions.[3] Obviously, a historian of medieval lived religion needs to make some compromises on the study of individual experiences, as they are approachable only in a mediated form; nevertheless, a similar framework and quest guide this work. The aim, however, is not only to elucidate the elements of lay piety but also to scrutinize the way demonic possession intersected various levels: personal experiences, social dynamics, and cultural expectations.

Clearly, social status, gender, and age as well as other variables in a person's position affected the way he or she lived his or her religion. Lived religion is not, however, here considered to be synonymous with the concept of 'popular

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[2] On the conceptualizing of lived religion in the medieval context, see also Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Raisa Maria Toivo, 'Religion as Experience,' in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe c. 1300–1700*, ed. by Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Raisa Maria Toivo (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 1–18 and John H. Arnold, 'Histories and Historiographies of Medieval Christianity,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. by John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 23–41.

[3] See, for example, Meredith B. McGuire, *Contested Meanings and Definitional Boundaries: Historicizing the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); R. Ruard Ganzevoort and Srdjan Sremac, eds., *Lived Religion and the Politics of (In)Tolerance* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

religion,' which was formerly used to denote the religiosity of the common people or 'folkloric' elements in religion. Religiosity or culture is not seen as a top-down process and there is no intention here of drawing a clear distinction between the culture of the elites and the lower strata, as was typical among scholars of popular religion.[4] Obviously, there was a difference between the daily experiences of religion-as-lived and the prescribed religion of institutionally defined beliefs and practices, and these differences form one part of this study. Furthermore, in the conceptualizations of this book, lived religion is not a stagnant mind-set that exists in the background. It is an active, dynamic process, something that is being done and performed, being lived out in daily life.

Lived religion is a complex concept since a generally approved definition of religion does not even exist.[5] The specific perspective on religion as lived practice in this book is that of devotional strategies: how people interacted with a saint. As demonic possession was a spiritual state, the explanation and remedy for the affliction were found in that sphere as well. Driving out malign spirits had Biblical prototypes, and even if such miracles were not among the most typical ones, they can regularly be found in late medieval hagiography. The whole procedure, that is diagnosing the symptoms, deciding the methods for cure and playing one's part in the negotiation with a saint, required careful consideration, deliberate decisions, and planning for the future. When something was amiss, first the participants: the victim, family members, and neighbours needed to negotiate a plausible reason for the affliction. If demons were considered to be behind it, almost the only possible remedy was to invoke a saint for help. Earthly doctors could not help with spiritual needs, even if people sometimes had recourse to them, and in the hagiographic material exorcisms as ceremonies came second to delivery miracles in the search for a cure. If a saint was to be invoked, participants first needed to decide which saint, how it was to be done, and who was to take the initiative if the victim him- or herself was unable to do it. Invocation required certain rituals, such as a vow: a prayer and a counter-gift to the saint if she or he helped. This was often accompanied by various signs and symbols of humility and desperation. Similarly, rituals, such as pilgrimages, were crucial in the manifestation of gratitude. The whole process required time, money, and effort; invocations were

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[4] The strong polarity and differences between clerical and lay culture are stressed, for example, by Jacques le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Âge. Temps, travail et culture en Occident* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), while continuity rather than disjunction is stressed by several scholars, for example Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On the historiography of popular culture and popular religion, see Gábor Klaniczay, '"Popular Culture" in Medieval Hagiography and in Recent Historiography,' in *Agiografia e culture popolari: Hagiography and Popular Cultures*, ed. by Paolo Golinelli (Bologna: Clueb, 2012), pp. 17–44 and for conceptualizing popular religion Laura A. Smoller, '"Popular" Religious Culture(s),' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, pp. 340–56.

[5] See also Heinz Streib, 'Introduction,' in *Lived Religion: Conceptual, Empirical and Practical-Theological Approaches—Essays in Honor of Hans-Günter Heimbrock*, ed. by Astrid Dinter and Kerstin Soderblom (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. IX–XIII.

not light decisions but needed proper consideration and conscious engagement. They were also a social strategy. This does not mean that interaction with a saint was used cynically or deviously. Recourse to a saint's help was a traditional coping mechanism in daily adversities, but genuine devotion was required for it to be effective.

The wider historiographical framework for this volume can be deemed to be that of social history; there is a long and prolific tradition of using canonization processes and hagiography in the study of social historical questions, such as family, children, daily life, and devotional practices.[6] Demonic presence and devotional strategies are analysed in the context of social relations, the construction of identity and alterity, of corporeality and sexuality, and of the sacred. Therefore other concepts, especially gender, are important for the analysis, as they emerge from and illuminate the social nature of religion-as-lived.

In medieval imagery, women and demons were linked in many ways: in moralists' warnings women were the Devil's gateway, more prone to sin, and feared to corrupt the whole community by their vices. However, even the elite's theoretical gender constructions were multifaceted, unstable, and contradictory.[7] Hierarchy may have been a crucial constituent of medieval culture, but the stereotypical gender images of didactic rhetoric were met in daily life only in mediated form. Women were more numerous as victims of demonic possession but did not form an exclusive category in medieval hagiography. Furthermore, the lay perspective on the phenomenon offers various explanations for this since it does not insist only on women's inherent wickedness. Gender was not a strict binary category; it operated in complex and diverse ways. Therefore, sensitivity to other social variables as well as local nuances forms an essential core for the analysis. Gender is approached as a social and cultural construction, as a matrix where multiple elements of status intermingle. It is seen as a performance, an active, ongoing process, during which various aspects of a person's social status are negotiated and manifested when he or she reacts to the hopes, expectations, and demands of

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[6]   The field is too extensive to be cited here fully; for the seminal works, see, however, Pierre-André Sigal, *L'Homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (xie–xiie siécle)* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985); Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1977); Ronald C. Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000); Michael E. Goodich, *Violence and Miracle in the Fourteenth Century: Private Grief and Public Salvation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Christian Krötzl, *Pilger, Mirakel und Alltag: Formen des Verhaltens im skandinavischen Mittelalter (12.–15. Jahrhundert)* (Helsinki: SHS, 1994) ; and Didier Lett, *L'Enfant des miracles: Enfance et société au Moyen Âge (xiie–xiiie siécle)* (Paris: Aubiers, 1997). For the historiography, see also Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Recent Trends in the Study of Medieval Canonizations,' *History Compass* 8:9 (2010): 1083–92.

[7]   See especially Theresa Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2010). Furthermore, clerical authors used gendered images in multiple, 'queer' ways, depicting positive elements, like God, the Church, and Christianity, as feminine. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982). Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

the surrounding community.[8] Gender, too, was something that was lived out and experienced in daily life. Demons were used as an explanation in this process, especially when something went wrong.

On occasion, mental disorder and disability appear as contextual elements within the analysis of lived religion. Some signs of demonic presence could be linked to physical impairments, like losing one's sight, speech, or the ability to use body parts. For the most part, however, demonic possession was a behavioural category, and a huge number of victims were mentally disordered. Some victims' mental capacity was so badly affected that they were disabled in their communities, meaning they were seen as deviant, removed from their normal positions, and even marginalized and prohibited from taking independent action.[9] Many of the symptoms of demonic possession and raving madness (*furia*) or insanity (*insania /amentia/dementia*) were similar and the categories to some extent overlapped. Part of the analysis that follows deals with how and why similar symptoms were categorized differently in different contexts and for people of different backgrounds. The intention is not, however, to make a retrospective analysis of the cases, but to scrutinize the methods of categorization of the period under study.[10] Throughout the book the vocabulary found in the sources is used even if it is not always consistent (not even within a single case or miracle collection) or it does not conform to modern ideas of appropriately sensitive language. In some miracle collections or canonization processes demonic harassment, outright possession, as well as terms denoting mental or physical illness were used interchangeably, while in other collections the dividing line was strict. How and why these lines were or were not drawn is one topic of analysis.

Mental disorder is the general term adopted for this work, as in many cases it best encapsulates the affliction demons caused and leaves aside the aetiology,

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[8] For a similar approach, see, for example, the following collections: Carol Braun Pasternack and Sharon Farmer, eds., *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Lisa Bitel and Felice Lifshitz, eds., *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Marianna G. Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo, eds., *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013).

[9] In current disability studies, the 'social model' differentiates between physical impairment and its social consequences, i.e. disability; the 'cultural model' in turn argues that impairment is also a culturally constructed term. See Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking about Physical Impairment during the High Middle Ages, c. 1100–1400* (London: Routledge, 2006); *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. by Joshua R. Eyler (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010); Wendy J. Turner, ed., *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Wendy J. Turner, *Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill, Incompetent, and Disabled in Medieval England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); and Jenni Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Interaction in the Middle Ages: Construction of Impairments in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Canonization Processes* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016).

[10] Many scholars have refuted 'psychopathological' explanations. See, however, Carlos Espí Forcén and Fernando Espí Forcén, 'Demonic Possessions and Mental Illness: Discussion of Selected Cases in Late Medieval Hagiographical Literature,' *Early Science in Medicine* 19 (2014): 258–79 for diagnosing psychotic, mood, neurotic, and personality disorders, and epilepsy in cases from thirteenth-century hagiography. The authors argue that the descriptions in the texts enable a retrospective analysis, but they deem the exorcismal practices to be literary inventions.

which cannot be verified, and does not argue for a certain kind of modern diagnosis, like mental illness. Mental disorder also leaves ample room for interpretation of causes and symptoms. One of the points of analysis is whether physical and mental infirmities were on certain occasions explained by demons or whether it was a label used to marginalize members of the community already condemned as deviant.

Religion, both as an institution and lived practice, was a framework structuring life. Demons were an integral part within it intersecting cultural, communal, and individual levels. They illuminated general fears, such as the unpredictability of life and the uncertainty of salvation for the soul, but also gave daily troubles, such as mental incapacity, inversion of identity, and communal disorder, a comprehensible causality. Demons within religion-as-lived could be used to signal sore points and anxieties, but they also offered a coping mechanism; otherwise inexplicable situations could be explained by demonic presence and ameliorated by invoking a saint for help. Religion created a performative space, and demonic presence, as a fluid and multifaceted category within it, enabled participants to take initiatives in that field.

Demons on the Desktop: Medieval Contexts and Modern Scholars

On the last day of July in 1319 in Montefalco, Angiorellus Iacopinis, an inhabitant of that city, stepped in front of the inquisitorial committee and took an oath to tell the truth about the life and miracles of Clare of Montefalco. He was interrogated and examined, and stated that he knew the following. He saw in the convent of the Holy Cross by the sepulchre of Saint Clare two persons oppressed by demons, namely Bartholillus and Chiaruccia. They suffered a lot since people were conjuring the demons to expel them, and had people not been holding Bartholillus and Chiaruccia tightly, and they were hard to hold, they would have dashed their heads against the walls. They were mocking Saint Clare by calling her by the negative variant of her name, Chiaruccia (hence making her the namesake of the female demoniac), and did not want to hear her proper name mentioned. Then the witness saw the demons leaving their victims and he also saw on the ground a black scarab, which many of those present said had come out of the mouth of one of them. He saw the victims quieten down, but they did not yet say they were liberated as there were many demons in them. And he heard one of the demons in Bartholillus claim that it had entered his heart by the nail and flesh (*per unguem et carnem*), probably meaning it was not swallowed, while the demon had got into Chiaruccia at a well. Angiorellus did not know more about these incidents, all of which took place the same year Saint Clare died, but when asked he replied that

he did not remember the month or day or the people present. Interrogated about the location, he replied that the events took place in the monastery and in the church. And all this he told to tell the truth after being interrogated diligently and on his own.[11]

This case manifests many typical features of both demonic possession and delivery miracles, and also illuminates the tangled discussions within modern scholarship. By the thirteenth century, demons were a well-established element in Church teaching. They had become a particularly heated topic after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, where the role and position of the Devil were defined and the new regulation for annual confession of sins was promulgated. This milestone forms a logical starting point for this research. This was also the time when Caesar of Heisterbach wrote his Dialogue on Miracles: as he claimed, demons were truly legion, especially in the writings of learned men.

In learned discussions from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, several different, yet intertwined, discourses on demons can be distinguished. One of them was sin in general and demons' role in prompting sin. In the didactic material, demons were depicted as allegories of sin, enticing Christians to evil. Often they acted in a corporeal form, meaning they could simulate a person or animal, for example. Weak Christians succumbed to the demons' temptations, because of human nature and the Christian's frail morality. The Devil had been depicted as the adversary, as an ever-present enemy, found within early Christian texts and forever thereafter.[12]

Exempla, cautionary moral tales of sin and demons, multiplied after the Fourth Lateran Council. One of their aims was to convince Christians of the spiritual benefit gained by annual confession. Demoniacs could be and often were seen as innocent victims, like Bartholillus and Chiaruccia, because despite their almost blasphemous insults, it was the demons inside who uttered these words, not the victims themselves. Furthermore, no personal wrongdoing was given as a reason for their affliction. Consideration of personal culpability is often, however, found in miracle collections with narratives aiming at didactic ends. In exempla, personified evil had an obvious role. That material does not, however, directly reflect lived experience, but rather an ideal model on the one hand, and negative stereotypes on the other. For the purposes of this book, this material is often used as a framework against which daily life is reflected.

One of the declarations of the Fourth Lateran Council was the definition of the role and position of the Devil as a fallen angel, a powerful adversary, though

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[11] *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, ed. by Enrico Menestò (Spoleto: Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo, 1991), *testis* CCXXII, p. 500.

[12] Gerard Bartelink, 'Denominations of the Devil and Demons in the Missale Gothicum', in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, ed. by Nienke Vos and Willemien Otten (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 195–209.

clearly inferior in power to God.[13] The incentive for this definition likely lay in the struggle against the dualist heresy of the so-called Cathars; 'heretical depravity' was another larger discussion linking the Devil with the religious practices of the laity, particularly in the thirteenth century. Sects deemed as heretical were often accused of worshipping the Devil and engaging in horrendous acts and rites. In their cases, submitting to the Devil's will was seen as voluntary; many of the more imaginative rituals the heretics were accused of bear a resemblance to the later accusations of participation in witches' Sabbath. Such elements, Devil worship or even the Devil himself, were not regularly mentioned in the inquisition processes investigating heresies; much of the interest was instead directed at those support-ing the heretics.[14] In antiheretical polemics, on the other hand, conscious devi-ation from the truth of the Church, contesting its position or papal prerogatives, was branded as the work of the Devil and the leaders of the heretical groups as Antichrist. Conversely, similar rhetoric was used among these groups against Catholics and especially against inquisitors and the pope.[15] Some saints, like Anthony of Padua, were famous for using their miracle-working abilities against heretics. Heresy is present also in Clare of Montefalco's case, as she was accused of having followed the free spirit heresy. This theme was regarded as so important that its repudiation was listed in the *articuli*, the questions to be asked of witnesses.[16] Demons did not, however, feature very prominently in Clare's position as a thaumaturge, as the testimony of Angiorellus contains the only post-mortem delivery miracle to be found in the surviving records.[17]

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[13] Con. Lat. IV, cons 1 and cons 21. On the Fourth Lateran council and heresy, see Andrew Roach, *The Devil's World: Heresy and Society 1100–1300* (Harlow: Pearson, Longman, 2005), pp. 92–6 *et passim*. The idea of the Devil as the leader of malign forces and demons as his minions was not coherently followed in all the medieval texts; I will apply the vocabulary of the source material even if it is some-times inconsistent.

[14] 'Heresy' investigated by inquisitorial methods was a complex and wide category, though. There is an ongoing discussion of the relationship between religious dissent, heresy, and persecution. See, for example, John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Mark Gregory Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245–1246* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950–1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); and Christine Caldwell Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[15] Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, pp. 23–56.

[16] *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, 'Articuli interrogatorii,' questions CII–CLXLVI, pp. 17–18. See also Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Travis Allen Stevens, 'Preaching, Heresy, and the Writing of Female Hagiography,' in *Beyond Catholicism: Heresy, Mysticism, and Apocalypse in Italian Culture*, ed. by Fabrizio De Donn and Simon Gilson (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2013), pp. 33–54.

[17] More than half of the original 486 depositions and one third of the *articuli interrogatorii* are missing. Enrico Menestò, 'Introduzione,' in *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, pp. XXI–LXIX. There is one other case of demonic possession recorded in the list of questions: *Articulus* 222, p. 33: 'Item quod liberavit dominam Amatam uxorem Petrioli castellani de Castro Bono, a quatuor demonibus qui tenuerant eam diu obsessam.' No deposition from the case survives.

Heresy and particularly the Church's fight against it are important here for methodological reasons. Both canonization and inquisition trials were judicially a form of *inquisitio*, albeit focusing on different ends of the religious spectrum. There were, nonetheless, many similarities in their implementation and the laity's religious practices were a major element in both. Furthermore, as many scholars of inquisition processes have focused especially on methodology, in an effort to filter out the various rhetorical levels of narrations, these studies form a valuable point of comparison.[18] Studies of inquisition processes comment in important ways on the power relations within the Church and those between the clergy and laity. They offer, however, a specific perspective on the laity's devotional practices. Canonization inquiries, containing as they do a less coercive dialogue, facilitate the wider thematic approach cultivated in this volume.

Magic and witchcraft formed yet another field of discussion in the Christian cosmography of evil. Harmful magic, *maleficium*, was an age-old practice, but at the end of the Middle Ages witchcraft gained a new characteristic, that of demonolatry, the intentional worship of and subservience to demons. A number of early modern theoretical notions concerning demons emerged from medieval perceptions, and so demonology forms a significant point of reference for the present volume. Demonological treatises, however, regularly lack the myriad of lived practices which form the core of the analysis here. The focus of scholars has been on 'thinking with demons,' to follow Stuart Clark's famous formulation; the core has been the analysis of texts and language.[19] The intention here is, instead, to read the acts, essentially rituals, as messages reflecting the ways the participants utilized demons as tools for thinking.

Devil worship has been characterized as peculiar to early modern witchcraft theory, distinguishing it from other cultures as well as earlier European culture. Some of its key concepts, such as physical interaction with demons, were present already in medieval theories and occasionally reflected in miracle narrations as

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[18] See esp. Caterina Bruschi, *The Wandering Heretics of Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, even if they hold different views concerning how well the lived reality and identity of the accused can be elicited from the material. For comparison of inquisition and canonization processes, see also Gábor Klaniczay, 'The Inquisition of Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes,' in *Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes. Structures, Functions, and Methodologies*, ed. by Christian Krötzl and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 43–74. See also the seminal work of Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[19] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers. Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002). There was also increased interest in defining the boundaries between proper religious practice and superstition. Michael Bailey (*Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013)) sees the fifteenth-century as a crucial turning point, while Euan Cameron (*Enchanted Europe. Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)) analyses the changing definitions of superstition from the late Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. The consistent trait was the use of such a definition as a method to denounce the religious practices of others.

well. Its most extreme form, copulation with demons may be found in sexually coloured cases in canonization processes, too. Demonological treatises as well as mass trials, not to mention actual panics, were a later invention, emerging in the mid-fifteenth century and forming a suitable temporal end-point for the present volume.

The link between demonic possession and witchcraft was more pronounced in the early modern era when the possessed were often seen as victims of someone else's malevolent bewitchment or as having willingly submitted to the Devil. Malediction as a reason for possession can also be found in the medieval material, but it is not a major trend. Other people's malice was rarely given as an explanation for medieval demonic possession, while it was a major factor in later witchcraft accusations. If Devil worship was a crucial component in elite discussions, *maleficium* stood out in peer accusations.[20] Social conflicts were also reflected in cases of demonic possession and the interesting question arises as to whether they were a way to act out social tensions, fears, and ill feelings, as was the case with witchcraft accusations. In both cases, spiritual reasoning was offered as an explanation for social problems, and so witchcraft accusations offer an interesting point of comparison, even if these phenomena were not directly connected and their temporal evolution is unclear. However, scholarship on witchcraft accusations tends to focus on one rather restricted geographical area at a time. Since canonization processes were shaped by shared regulations and background motivations, hearings from different parts of Europe are comparable, thus enabling a wider geographical coverage for this volume.

Before European culture became obsessed with *maleficium* and demonolatry, magic had a different set of connotations. For example, necromancy, that is conjuring, adjuring, and commanding spirits, was a learned art requiring ritualistic skills and a purified moral state. It was mainly practised by clerics. It was not considered to be a sin, let alone apostasy from Christian faith, like demonolatry. The thirteenth century can be seen as a turning point in attitudes; these practices did not vanish but gradually became forbidden and secret rites.[21] Nevertheless, Angiorellus in 1319 still talks about people conjuring the spirits inside Bartholillus and Chiaruccia. He may have meant exorcism attempts, as terms and practices were not always clear. Particularly in Italian cases, demons were quite vocal and

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[20] On social conflicts in witchcraft accusations, see Raisa Maria Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society: Finland and the Wider European Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Alison Rowlands, ed., *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). For developments in the historiography, see also Marko Nenonen and Raisa Maria Toivo, eds., *Writing Witch-Hunt Histories: Challenging the Paradigm* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[21] Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Clare Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); and Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2016), p. 75.

participants tried to make them confess their origin as well as the time and method of their departure. Conjuring as a term appears occasionally in the cases under study in this book.

All these phenomena were closely interrelated, and linkages between heresy and possession were occasionally made in didactic material. For example, Caesar of Heisterbach analyses the interconnection of heresy and possession; both were real, but heretics were much more closely associated with the Devil. Thomas of Cantimpré gave an example of simulated possession where a heretic faked being possessed to evade inquisitorial interrogations and a potential further consequence: burning. If he was believed to be possessed, he would likely not be held responsible for his acts and words. The heretic was carried bound to a church, like a demoniac. At the church there was, however, a genuine demoniac who, in a fit of insanity, burned the dissembling heretic. Heresy was punished thus appropriately, but the real demoniac was freed from the malign spirits after the act.[22]

Mysticism was another subject of discussion closely linked and partially overlapping with demonic possession, even if it was from the other end of the spiritual spectrum. Mystical experiences and especially the position of female mystics became topics of intense public discussion in the late Middle Ages. As spiritual phenomena, being possessed by a malign spirit or inspired by a divine one were, obviously, opposite extremes. However, the manifestations, such as convulsions, shrieks, and strange words, were often similar and one state was occasionally mistaken for the other. The discernment of female mystics' source of inspiration became a crucial question because they contested the conventional positions and cultural roles reserved for religious women. A background motivation for this was, as both Nancy Caciola and Dyan Elliott note, that from the perspective of the clerical elite, women in general were considered to be on the margins, the 'religious other,' and now they were claiming positions of authority.[23] The

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[22] Thomas of Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus quid illustrandis saeculi decimi tertii moribus conferat*, ed. by Elie Berger (Paris: Thorin, 1895), II.57, p. 68. The treatise was written in the mid-thirteenth century, but the message of this tale was still useful in the second quarter of the next century, when Jean Gobi wrote his *Scala coeli* and adapted this tale for his work. Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, p. 208 with endnotes. For Caesar's arguments: 'Quod autem quidam propter quaestum se obsessos simulent, non nego; quod vero in quibusdam nulla sit fictio, subiecto probabitur exemplo.' Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum,* V, 12 and V, 25: 'Haec dicta sint de haereticis, qui membra sunt diaboli. Hoc enim noveris, quod multo intensius suam diabolus exerceat malitiam in haereticis, quam in energuminis.'

[23] Nancy Caciola, 'Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42:2 (2000): 268–306, here pp. 289–90 and Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). Dyan Elliott, 'Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality,' in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, ed. by Peter Biller and A. J. Minnis (York: York Medieval Press, 1997), pp. 141–73; Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Dyan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200–1500* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). See also Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008). On the discernment of spirits in mystics, see also Barbara Newman, 'Possessed by the Spirit:

construction of a universalizing discourse of the 'feminine' and the 'diabolical' and their interconnection has been the pivotal outcome of these studies. This volume, however, focuses on the opposite: on revealing the fractures of these discourses and conceptualizing religion and gender as varied lived practice and performance in order to reveal nuances within the intersections between religion, gender, and the demonic.

Divine possession became subjected to stricter control and was viewed with considerable suspicion in the late Middle Ages. Clare of Montefalco was an example of a religious woman who had mystical experiences and practised severe asceticism. She firmly believed and argued that she had Jesus Christ in her heart. Therefore, the detail that the demonic spirit was in Bartholillus' heart is striking; typically, only the divine spirit was thought to enter the heart and Bartholillus' example may be unique. Clare's claims were taken quite literally by the sisters of her convent; after her death they performed an autopsy on her and found the sign of the crucifix in her heart. Clare may have been protected from wider accusations of heresy and general suspicion of her religious experiences by the protective walls of the Augustinian convent of Santa Croce, where she lived in *clausura*.

Even if research in this field has been an enormous inspiration for this work, these phenomena—female mystics' inspiration and visions on the one hand and explanations for the everyday troubles of more 'ordinary' Christians on the other— are not intimately linked. The theological ponderings as to whether, for example, Clare had genuinely experienced Christ entering her heart, as she claimed, or whether she was deluded by a demon, as many female mystics were claimed to be, were of a different nature. Such discussions may have even seemed irrelevant for people seeking a cure at her shrine: for Bartholillus and Chiaruccia and other people present at the shrine, Clare was a saint possessing miracle-working powers and capable of driving out malign spirits. Bartholillus and Chiaruccia, on the other hand, were not mistaken for mystics; raving madness may have been an alternative diagnosis for their violent convulsions in the minds of people present. Their mockery and fear of the saint may well have clarified the classification of the case as one caused by a supernatural, not natural agency.

The definitions of demonic presence were of a different nature in these cases; the discernment of visionaries' inner spirits was, to a large extent, an elite theoretical discussion, while for the lay demoniacs' the negotiations took place amid daily life. Obviously, theological thinking played a role in defining demonic possession, too, but on a general level the basic quandary was whether the person was mentally or physically ill, or possessed by a demon. In the case of Bartholillus and Chiaruccia,

Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century,' *Speculum* 73 (1998): 733–70; Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft and Magic in Late Medieval Europe,' in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000–1500*, ed. by Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 310–37; and Peter Dinzelbacher, *Heilige oder Hexen. Schicksale auffälliger Frauen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1995).

there was no speculation about the possibility of divine inspiration, and the victims did not claim an authoritative spiritual position, as did the mystics. The phenomenon under scrutiny here could rather be defined, following Stuart Clark, as a 'hinterland of possession behaviour,' meaning the focus is on the way ordinary men and women accounted for their own various afflictions.[24] As Clark argues, such accounts are not easily accessible, but they do not, however, 'lie lost to historical view' as canonization processes offer a large number of them. Yet, such cases have not hitherto been analysed in full. The cases under scrutiny here rarely, if ever, gained wider notoriety; they took place on a communal level. Cases of demonic possession of this kind were part of social life; they fitted into the thought patterns of ordinary people as well as those of the learned. Nevertheless, demonic possession was not a normal feature of life, but rather a clear disruption; it represented a threat to the social order and gendered norms, and upset the daily life of a family and even of the whole community. In the social context, demonic presence could also be used as an explanation in upsetting, threatening, or unbearable situations when no other means of explanation could be provided.

Demonic possession was linked with all the aforementioned discussions yet remained a separate field. The unifying features were demonic powers and the role of the Devil, and Christians' submissiveness in the face of the supernatural. Demonic possession as a phenomenon was connected to various contemporary debates, while the modern analysis of the phenomenon similarly encompasses a wide array of explanations and conceptualizations. Brian P. Levack, for one, argues very strongly for demonic possession as a cultural performance that followed a script encoded in the victims' religious cultures; it offered them a set of beliefs and practices that they articulated and acted out, often at the prompting of others.[25] On a general level, one can agree: all miraculous recoveries, or at least their interpretations, were cultural performances up to a certain point. However, there were no indisputable signs of demonic presence, and beliefs and practices varied in different contexts. While a more regulated cultural script and set of definitions were developing during these centuries, there was not yet a consistent narrative of demonic powers or a fixed set of beliefs or practices guiding the lived experiences of the late medieval laity and the use of demons to explain their daily troubles. Rather, a plethora of underlying causes, signs, and responses emerged from the social needs and cultural conditions, thus exposing the complexity of demonic possession.

Moshe Sluhovsky argues that spirit possession was essentially a linguistic construct that was used to attribute meaning to physical and spiritual phenomena, and not a stable category. He sees corporeality and embodied experience as the core of possession and defines it as verbal and physical chaos with indeterminate

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[24] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, p. 391. See also Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 33.
[25] Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 131, 140, and 169.

symptoms in the pre-discernment (diagnosis) stage, and with inherent uncertainty about the aetiology. Analysis of temporal changes in embodied encounters with the supernatural is a major goal of his study.[26]

The heterogeneity of the medieval Church, on a general level and not only in relation to demonic powers, is widely acknowledged. The increasing desire and striving to control the use of the sacraments, rituals, and lay religiosity as well as the discernment of spirits should be seen as part of a regulatory and unifying process. During the Middle Ages, delivery from malign spirits was essentially a divine grace, a miracle performed by God through a saint's *virtus*, hence uncontrollable by humans. Nancy Caciola, for example, sees the decrease in delivery miracles as a sign of increased clerical control: exorcism ceased to be a mercy bestowed by God and became instead ceremony presided over by a priest, a liturgical performance manifesting clerical authority and power. Unlike a miracle, a performance could be regulated. This was a change which served the ideological needs of the Church. Caciola links this development to the Schism and its aftermath, and to reform movements from below.[27]

Caciola dates the changes largely to the fifteenth century, while Moshe Sluhovsky argues their roots can be found in the fourteenth century, with major change taking place only in the second half of the sixteenth century. Unlike Caciola, he sees the newly emerging sources, exorcism manuals, compilations, and conjurations as individual enterprises. In the fifteenth century, there were no officially authorized rituals or rules governing exorcisms, and the early manuals were approved, if at all, only at a synodal level. The curial regulations were not set down before the late sixteenth century. However, Sluhovsky, too, sees the changes as regulatory; the aim was to replace the diverse methods of individual practitioners, be they priests or lay healers, with one standardized liturgical rite performed by a selected and trained group of exorcists. He also links these changes to a broader redrawing of the boundaries between the sacred and the profane and to a campaign to control the miraculous. Sluhovsky takes the general intention one step further; according to him, the clericalization of exorcismal practices was meant to reform not only

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[26] Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, pp. 3–6.

[27] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, pp. 225–73. See, however, Alain Boureau, who maintains that the clerical authorities' intention to clarify the distinction between demonic possession and mental disturbance may have been one reason for the decrease. Alain Boureau, 'Saints et démons dans les procès de canonisation du début du xive siècle,' in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge: Aspects juridiques et religieux/Medieval Canonization Processes—Legal and Religious Aspects*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay (Rome: École française de Rome, 2004), pp. 199–221. See, however, Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 15, who argues that in the beginning of the early modern era the boundaries between natural and supernatural causalities and between physiological and psychological symptoms were still completely porous. Cf. H. C. Erik Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People: Reflections on the Popularity of Demon Possession in Sixteenth-Century Germany,' in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. by Steven Ozment (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), pp. 99–119, esp. pp. 101–2 for the opposite kind of development: expressions of folly, like the Ship of Fools, were reinterpreted as diabolic from the Reformation era on.

exorcism but also the clergy itself.[28] The perspective of lived religion depicts a different kind of image of this evolution. It was neither swift nor uniform, but rather it was sporadic and gradual, and marked by geographical differences.

Despite or because of these changes, demonic possession as a phenomenon gained in importance in the early modern era; this period has even been characterized as 'the Golden Age of the Demoniac.'[29] In addition to a general demonization of the world, which was manifested particularly in the witch craze and the emergence of demonology, demonic possession was linked to the religious strife of the Reformation. Exorcisms, especially in France and Germany, were part of confessional propaganda; they had a pronounced public and political nature.[30]

Demons in Inquisitorial Logic: Canonization Processes and Delivery Miracles

Demonic possession is here approached essentially from the point of view of the victims' miraculous recoveries. The narrations to be found in the depositions of canonization processes were later reconstructions of the events, a combination of the inquisitorial committees' perspectives and lay participants' narrated experiences and memories. In addition to the personal preferences of commissioners, proctors, and witnesses, shared values and regulations, such as canon law and theological definitions of the miraculous or of demonic powers, influenced the outcome. These values and regulations were a mixture of judicial requirements, general Christian notions, and local culture, as well as personal choices. Given this shared background,

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[28] Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, pp. 61–8. Matteo Duni, for his part, sees the Council of Trent as a turning point. According to him, 'The pre-Tridentine Catholic Church was anything but a monolith speaking with a single voice, but rather a massive heterogeneous institution encompassing many different beliefs and practices.' Matteo Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell: Witches, Sorcerers, and the Inquisition in Renaissance Italy* (Florence: Syracuse University in Florence, 2007), p. IX. Midelfort dates the change to the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614. H. C. Erik Midelfort, 'Natur und Besessenheit,' in Hans de Waardt et al., eds., *Dämonische Besessenheit. Zur Interpretation eines kulturhistorischen Phänomens* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2005), p. 81. See also Young, *A History of Exorcism*, pp. 61–131 for 'crises' of exorcism during the Middle Ages and changes in the early modern era.

[29] On demonization, see, for example, Kathleen Growther, 'From Seven Sins to Lutheran Devils: Sin and Social Order in an Age of Confessionalization,' in *La pathologie du pouvoir: vices, crimes et délits des gouvernants—Antiquité, Moyen Âge, époque modern*, ed. by Patrick Gilli (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 485–524. Mystery plays depicting the possessed, and thus familiarizing a wider audience with the phenomenon, came into being at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Andreea Marculescu, 'Mystery Plays Re-Loaded: Performing Demonic Possession in the *Histoires véritables*,' in *French Renaissance and Baroque Drama: Text, Performance, Theory*, ed. by Michael Meere (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2015), pp. 1–21.

[30] On exorcisms as confessional propaganda, see Levack, *The Devil Within*, pp. 85–100. On public exorcisms as political manifestations of conflict between Catholics and Protestants, see Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London: Routledge, 2004). Sluhovsky (*Believe Not Every Spirit*) argues strongly for de-dramatizing early modern exorcisms and sees them as part and parcel of daily life, even if scholars have mainly focused on the most dramatic cases. On German cases, see Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People.'

the processes from various parts of Europe are comparable. Nevertheless, each process formed a context of its own, as the practicalities of the hearings, question-naires, cases under scrutiny, and inclinations of the inquisitorial committees varied. Furthermore, various local practices, discourses, and definitions linked to the cultural and geographical context are important as contributing elements to the analysis of lived religion; sensitivity to these nuances is a major methodological goal of this work.

Canonization processes—inquiries into the life, merits, and miracles of a candidate to the altars—were judicial inquiries following the regulations of canon law. They were opened by the pope. Papal commissioners and local proctors formed the inquisitorial committees carrying out the interrogations and had a crucial role in selecting the cases to be investigated and witnesses to be interro-gated. Usually, the local proctor compiled the detailed questions about life and miracles (*articuli*) to be asked of witnesses, and the *Interrogatorium* of the com-missioners validated their testimony.[31] There were variations in the processes, though. The list of questions was not always attached to the final records and the number and nature of *articuli* varied greatly between processes.

Canon law gave the overall guidelines for the selection of witnesses. As a rule, witnesses were to be reliable; mentally ill or witnesses of *infamia* were forbidden to testify. Furthermore, gender, age of majority, wealth, reputation, and the quality of their knowledge were all selection criteria for witnesses.[32] Therefore, to be summoned as a witness in a canonization hearing implied good social status. All these are interesting features, considering that former demoniacs sometimes testified themselves about their afflictions and subsequent cures. Witnesses were brought to the hearing by a general call, a *citatio generalis*, or they were personally summoned by the proctors. Witnesses needed to be accepted by the commissioners and swear an oath to tell the truth. Since canonization processes were a form of

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[31] The crucial canon law regulations were *Audivimus* and *Venerabilii*, which were attached to the *Liber Extra* of Pope Gregory IX (pope 1227–41) in 1234, and *Testes legitimos*, found for the first time in the canonization process of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in 1232. *Audivimus* declared canonization to be a papal prerogative, *Venerabilii* called for separated questioning of witnesses and due diligence in the act of interrogation, while *Testes legitimos*, also known as *Interrogatorium*, provided a standard set of control questions to ascertain the validity of the answers which the witnesses gave to the questions (*articuli*) formulated by the proctors on the *vita* and *miracula* of the saint. See Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Christian Krötzl, 'Approaching Twelfth to Fifteenth Century Miracles,' in *Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes: Structures, Functions, and Methodologies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 1–39; Thomas Wetzstein, *Heilige vor Gericht. Das Kanonisationsverfahren im europäischen Mittelalter* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004), pp. 538–9; Roberto Paciocco, *Canonizzazioni e culto dei santi nella christianitas (1198–1302)* (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2006), p. 58.

[32] The status and prerequisites as well as the incapacity of witnesses in general were discussed in several parts of the Decretals of Gratian and of Gregory IX. On the canon law regulations dealing with the selection of the witnesses in canonization hearings, see Christian Krötzl, 'Prokuratoren, Notare und Dolmetscher: Zu Gestaltung und Ablauf der Zeugeneinvernahmen bei spätmittelalterlichen Kanonisationsprozessen,' *Hagiographica* 5 (1998): 119–40; Christian Krötzl, 'Kanonisationsprozess, Sozialgeschichte und Kanonisches Recht im Spätmittelalter,' in *Nordic Perspectives on Medieval Canon Law*, ed. by Mia Korpiola (Helsinki: Matthias Calonius Society, 1999), pp. 19–39.

inquisitio, the *fama publica* of the investigated incident, and also of individual miracles, was a prerequisite, even if it was not always scrupulously observed.

Official notaries in a hearing, there being regularly three of them (often with a university degree), recorded the testimonies in *formam publicam*. Notaries were nominated by the commissioners and assisted them at the hearings, in which part of the questioning could be done by the notaries. They may also have been responsible for some standardization of the depositions according to certain patterns while writing them down. Not everything the witnesses said was written down, and what was recorded may have been moulded to better suit the needs of the inquisitorial committee. Depositions may also have been shortened and systematized, and the great majority of them were translated from the vernacular into Latin.[33]

Inquisitorial logic in canonization processes, the technique of eliciting the truth about spiritual matters, saintly powers, genuine miracles, and demonic powers, was elaborated gradually, and regulations were not always followed diligently. Sometimes, especially during the first half of the thirteenth century, the findings of hearings were rejected, or the pope ordered hearings to be repeated because of their legal inadequacy: the witnesses had not been interrogated one by one, or their testimonies had not been written down verbatim. The increase in judicial adequacy was not a steady process, though, but varied from one hearing to another.[34]

The questions of the inquisitorial committee reflected their expectations and dictated to a major degree the matters that were brought up and on which the witnesses were interrogated. The questions posed emphasized certain elements

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[33] On the practicalities of canonization hearings, see André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge: D'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988), pp. 39–67; Roberto Paciocco, *Canonizzazioni e culto dei santi*; Otfried Krafft, *Papsturkunde und Heiligsprechung: Die päpstlichen Kanonisationen vom Mittelalter bis zur Reformation. Ein Handbuch* (Köln: Böhlau, 2005). On the role of notaries, see Krötzl, 'Prokuratoren, Notare und Dolmetscher.' On possible moulding done by the notaries, see Didier Lett, *Un procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge: Essai d'histoire sociale. Nicolas de Tolentino, 1325* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2008), p. 265. For contrasting views concerning the work of notaries in the courts of Renaissance Rome, see Thomas Vance Cohen and Elizabeth Storr Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), p. 5, who note that 'The industry of the faithful notary does indeed afford us a very accurate transcription of words said […] but the truth behind those words is another matter.' See also Wetzstein, *Heilige vor Gericht*, pp. 250–9.

[34] Pope Gregory XI criticized the inquisitorial committee in the canonization process of Charles of Blois (1371) for failing to make clear in the records whether the witnesses were interrogated in detail following a certain questionnaire or only in a general manner. A list of questions was drawn up or at least recorded only afterwards. Bathélémy Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, 'La "Sainteté" de Charles de Blois,' *Revue des Questions Historiques* 54 (July 1926): 108–15 ; André Vauchez, 'Canonisation et politique au xive siècle: Documents inédits des Archives du Vatican relatifs au procès de canonisation de Charles de Blois, duc de Bretagne († 1364),' in *Miscellanea in onore di Monsignor Martino Giusti, prefetto dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano II* (Vatican City: Archivio Vaticano, 1978), pp. 381–404. For the 'partially forgotten practice of canonization' in the mid-fifteenth century, see Letizia Pellegrini, 'Testifying to Miracles: A Report on the Canonization Process of Bernardin of Siena,' in *Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes*, pp. 105–27.

deemed essential for a delivery to be labelled as miraculous, for an event to be conceptualized as demonic presence, and for behaviour to be understood as caused by an invading malign spirit. Details of lesser importance were not investigated or recorded. Only carefully selected cases and witnesses were investigated, and the very act of interrogation shaped the content of the depositions further.[35] The lay witnesses were expected to put their personal experiences and memories of demonic powers and subsequent miraculous deliveries into a narrative form that corresponded to the expectations of the inquisitorial committee, even if they were usually allowed, in addition to answering fixed questions, to give a free narrative of the events. The canonization records thus contain written Latinized highlights of oral vernacular narrations. The final records were the result of collaboration between lay witnesses and the inquisitorial committee, an amalgam of memories of actual past events and the demands of the miracle genre. Depositions were the result of communal memories of the occurrence as well as of personal choices in the use of rhetoric. Therefore, they do not always form a coherent narrative of the event. In the best possible circumstances, several witnesses were interrogated on the matter, and they could hold different perspectives and even contradict each other. Optimal cases reveal fractures in the consistency, enabling a glimpse of the process of diagnosing and labelling; that is, the way lay people were thinking, acting, and performing with demons in their lived religion.

By now it is clear to scholars that canonization processes, even if full of anecdotal details of daily experience, do not simply replicate authentic lay voices. Equally clear is that the actual incident, 'what really happened' when someone was thought to be possessed by a demon, cannot be accessed. All the aforementioned factors—the nature of the hagiographic genre, the questionnaire of the inquisitorial committee, the memories and oral narrations of the past event as well as the act of interrogation—shaped the content of the depositions. When studying lived religion and the laity's devotional strategies in the face of a demonic presence, this does not pose an insurmountable methodological problem. Obviously, one needs to be aware all of these 'filters' in the depositions. However, religion-as-lived, as it is understood here, includes norms and values as well as performances and their narrative forms. It is the multilayered practice of religion, the whole interpretation process encapsulated in the depositions of canonization processes, that is under scrutiny here. Thus, the methodological nexus emerges from the conceptualization of lived religion. The quest for both empirical research and conceptualization is crucial in this study and combining them is one of its contributions to the field; lived religion is not only a theoretical framework for the analysis but also a

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[35] On the selection of cases and preferences of the commissioners in the hearing of Thomas Cantilupe, see Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles, and Daily Life: The Evidence of Fourteenth-Century Canonization Processes* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 23–8 *et passim*; in the hearing of Nicholas of Tolentino, Lett, *Un procès de canonisation*.

methodological tool; a way to read the sources. These methodological features will be reflected throughout the volume.

Usually, but not always, cases of spirit possession and demonic harassment were accepted among the miracles to be scrutinized. Furthermore, lay witnesses were willing and able to describe their personal thoughts on and experiences of such phenomena. As for the canonization processes, the number of cases and quantity of details varied considerably from one process to another. The main corpus presented in the following was chosen for its qualitative value. Indeed, on occasion the most fruitful cases are those that were not, at least not directly, attributed to demonic presence regardless of fitting symptoms, since assessment of the methods of interpretation and categorization is crucial for understanding the phenomenon.

Two such processes where no undisputable cases of demonic possession can be found, namely those of Thomas Cantilupe[36] (AD 1307) and Louis of Toulouse[37] (AD 1308), are of crucial importance for the current analysis. Both of these processes were judicially rigorous, and the records were coherently organized: the witnesses to the life and miracles were separated from each other, all the witnesses to one miracle were interrogated one after another, and the depositions for each miracle were recorded together. In the Cantilupe process, the oath the witnesses took, the questionnaire forming the basis of the questions they were asked, and their summoning were clearly recorded; this process met the requirements of canon law so well that it is even claimed to have served as a model for later hearings. Among the forty or so miracles investigated in the hearing, only one case is noteworthy here. It was eventually categorized as raving madness, but some of the witnesses proposed demonic possession as the diagnosis. Because of that, the witnesses were asked of their means of classification. Since there were altogether eleven depositions to the case, many of them consisting of several folios, this case

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[36] Thomas Cantilupe (1218–82) was the Bishop of Hereford; he belonged to the high nobility of English society. He was educated in canon law and theology. His career as bishop was rather turbulent as he quarrelled with his archbishop, John Beckham. Miracles at his grave started five years after his death; Thomas' successor, Richard Swinfield, was the cult's main promoter. The canonization hearing was held in London and in Hereford, near the Welsh border. The commissioners were William Durand, Bishop of Mende, Ralph Baldock, Bishop of London, and William de Testa, a papal tax collector. They were learned in canon law and papal administration. On the practicalities of this hearing, see Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 23–70. For an introduction to the careers of the commissioners, see Bartlett, *The Hanged Man: A Story of Miracle, Memory, and Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 16–21, for their lives after the hearing, see pp. 126–38. Thomas was canonized in 1320. His canonization process is preserved in the manuscript in the Vatican Library, BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4015.

[37] Louis of Toulouse (1274–97) was of royal lineage through the Capetian house of Anjou and was the Archbishop of Lyon and later the Bishop of Toulouse. The inquiry into his life and miracles was carried out in Marseilles in 1308 and he was canonized in 1317. Commissioners of the hearing were Guy de Neuville, Bishop of Saintes and Raymond, Bishop of Lectoure. *Analecta Franciscana sive chronica aliaque varia documenta, Tomus VII. Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici O. F. M. Episcopi Tolosani*, ed. by Collegio S. Bonaventura (Florence: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1951).

enables a detailed analysis of communal negotiations on the diagnosis and treatment of potential demoniacs.

Louis' process was not of similar striking judicial thoroughness: the papal formulary *Interrogatorium* was not followed, or at least the questions and answers were not recorded in full for each witness. More than seventy miracles were recorded under the heading of *Attestaciones super miraculis*, but none of them was labelled as deliverance from demonic possession. This process' value for the current analysis arises similarly from the contradictory opinions recorded in the dossiers: there are miracles where the witnesses proposed that it was a case of demonic possession but the inquisitorial committee categorized it differently. Judicial rigour may have been a reason for the categorization, but the cases, nevertheless, enable an analysis of various perspectives on the phenomenon.

As to judicial scrupulousness, the hearing of Charles of Blois[38] (AD 1371) can be regarded in part as belonging to this same group. The records were divided into two sections: the depositions concerning the life and those concerning the miracles. The witnesses took an oath, the miracles were listed under separate headings, and the majority of the depositions in one case were recorded together. At least some of the questions pertaining to the *Interrogatorium* were asked of witnesses, but *articuli* were not apparently set beforehand. Pope Gregory XI criticized the inquisitorial committee for failing to make clear in the records whether the witnesses were interrogated in detail following a certain questionnaire or only in a general manner. Only afterwards did the inquisitorial committee compile, or at least record, a list of questions.[39] According to a later *relatio*, a shortened version of the hearing, there were thirty-six post-mortem miracles and three of them were listed under the heading 'miracula de demoniacis reductis ad sanitatem.'[40]

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[38]   Charles (d. 1364) was the Duke of Brittany; he fought for the Valois family in the Hundred Years' War. He was already famous during his lifetime for his ascetic lifestyle and piety. After his death in the Battle of Auray, he became a symbol of French resistance. Since his cult manifested patriotic pride, it was encouraged by the French. Conversely, the English and other political adversaries tried to prevent it from spreading. On Charles' cult and on the use of hagiography as war propaganda during the Hundred Years' War, see Goodich, *Violence and Miracle*, pp. 121–46.

[39]   The commissioners of the process were a bishop and two Benedictine abbots, Bishop Louis de Thézard from Bayeux, Gérard du Puy, Abbot of Marmoutiers close to Tours (later a cardinal), and the Abbot of Saint-Aubin of Angers, Jean de La Berchère. The hearing was carried out in Angers and it is preserved in Vatican library, BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4025 and Vatican archives ASV Camera apostolica, MS Collect. 434A. On the papal bull, see also Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, 'La "saintété" de Charles de Blois,' and Vauchez, 'Canonisation et politique au xive siècle.' Laura Ackerman Smoller suggests that the lack of *articuli interrogatorii* may have been a regional tradition as they are also missing in other Breton hearings, namely that of Yves of Tréguier (1330) and Vincent Ferrer (1453). Laura Ackerman Smoller, *The Saint and the Chopped-Up Baby: The Cult of Vincent Ferrer in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 68–70.

[40]   The shortened version of the hearing with a list of questions is in Vatican City, ASV Camera Apostolica, MS Collect. 434, on the miracles ff. 86v–120r. According to André Vauchez, ASV Collect. 434 is later than manuscript ASV Collect. 434A, thus it was potentially written after the bull of Gregorius IX. Vauchez, 'Canonisation et politique au XIVe siècle,' p. 389.

Clearly, a different kind of approach can be found in the canonization process of Birgitta of Sweden[41] (AD 1374–80). A major part of the interrogation was carried out by the local clergy in Sweden.[42] Instead of being divided into parts concerning the life and miracles of the candidate, Birgitta's process consisted of three parts, *Acta*, *Attestaciones*, and *Summarium*. *Acta* includes practical information about the process and miracles recorded by local clergy in Sweden as well as letters written by the Bishop of Linköping and the Archbishop of Lund, which also contain miracles. The cases registered by local clergy did not always meet the requirements of canon law: witnesses were not apparently interrogated separately, a pre-set questionnaire did not guide the interrogation, and depositions were not recorded verbatim or one by one but in the form of a synthesis. The less strict judicial framework enabled an interpretation that better suited the needs of the inquisitorial committee, for example by labelling cases as demonic possession. The depositions of witnesses interrogated in Italy were recorded in *Attestaciones*.[43] At least twelve different cases of demonic presence can be identified in the miracles recorded in Sweden, and fifteen cases, partly overlapping with the Swedish ones, in the depositions.[44] There are also short references to delivered demoniacs in both parts, but the total is around twenty-five cases. In addition to the high number, the significance of this process is also reflected in the detailed nature of the cases.

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[41] Birgitta of Sweden (1303–73) was a member of a Swedish noble family. She is one of the most well-known and most controversial medieval saints. The scholarship on Saint Birgitta is vast, but her miracles have aroused less interest. See, however, Anders Fröjmark, *Mirakler och helgonkult. Linköpings biskopsdöme under senmedeltiden* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1992); Janken Myrdal och Göran Bäärnhielm, eds., *Kvinnor, barn & fester i medeltida mirakelberättelser* (Skara: Skaraborgs länsmuseum, 1994); Krötzl, *Pilger, Mirakel, und Alltag*; and Cordelia Heβ, *Heilige machen im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseeraum. Die Kanonisationsprozesse von Birgitta von Schweden, Nikolaus von Linköping und Dorothea von Montau* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), pp. 99–204. On the practicalities of Birgitta's canonization, see Tore Nyberg, 'The Canonization Process of St. Birgitta of Sweden,' in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge*, pp. 67–85.

[42] The Nordic perspective on the phenomenon is also attested by other canonization processes and miracle collections from the area from the fifteenth century. *Processus canonizacionis beati Nicolai Lincopensis*, ed. by Tryggve Lundén (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1963); 'Vita s. Brynolphi Episc. Scarensis cum processu eius canonizationis,' *Scriptores rerum Svecicarum medii aevii*, Vol. 3: 2, ed. by Claudius Annerstedt (Uppsala: Zeipel et Palmblad, 1876); *Processus seu negocium canonizacionis B. Katerine de Vadstenis*, ed. by Isak Collijn (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1942–6); *Miracula defixionis domini. En mirakelsamling från Stockholms dominikankloster efter Kh 27 i Linköpings stifts- och landsbibliotek utgiven med inledning, översättning och register*, ed. by Tryggve Lundén (Göteborg: Elanders, 1950).

[43] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, ed. by Isak Collijn (Uppsala: Svenska fornskriftsäll-skapet, 1924–31). The commissioners in Birgitta's hearing were four cardinals: Thomas de Frignano, a Franciscan friar and former general of the order, Johannes de Amelia, former Archbishop of Corfu, Agapitus de Columna, former Bishop of Lisbon, and Gentilis de Sangro. *Summarium* is an abbreviation of the process made at the papal curia. *Acta* contains two major collections of Swedish miracles: the *Relacio Upsaliensis*, which was completed on 2 May 1375, and the *Commissio Lincopensis*, completed on 9 December 1376. Heβ, *Heilige machen*, pp. 111–12.

[44] Delivered demoniacs are also mentioned in the *articuli* both concerning Birgitta's life and posthumous miracles. 'Item quod meritis et oracionibus sanctis dicte domine Brigide omnipotens Deus liberauit miraculose multos demoniacos a diuersis generibus demoniorum obsessos,' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 23 and 'Item quod Deus post mortem eius liberauit plures demoniacos et expulit demonia ab eis meritis et oracionibus beate Brigide,' p. 26.

Many of them were vivid narrations and depositions to these cases were long. Furthermore, different versions of the same cases were recorded in the local hearings, the letters of the Swedish bishops, and eventually in the depositions, which reflects the importance attached to these miracles.

Geographically, thematically, and judicially, a third group is formed by Italian canonization processes. In addition to the records of Clare of Montefalco, referred to above, those of Nicholas of Tolentino[45] (AD 1325), Ambrose of Massa[46] (AD 1240–1), and John Buoni[47] (AD 1251–4) are also analysed. A trend common to all of them is the liberal categorization of demonic possession. No indisputable proof of demonic presence was required; physical symptoms alone could sometimes suffice for categorization, and the victims themselves were often active in testifying. The mixing of categories can be seen, for example, in the *relatio* of Nicholas' process. Among the 301 miracles listed in this shortened version of the hearing, thirteen were categorized under the heading *De demoniacis invasacis seu evanitis et adrabiacis liberatis*. Nine of them were demonic possessions.[48]

The Italian canonization processes were not carried out by meticulously following the requirements of canon law. During the thirteenth century, the pope criticized such processes or ordered them to be supplemented. The later ones, those of Clare and Nicholas, were not structured into different parts, witnesses to the same miracle were not interrogated together, and their testimonies can be found separated from each other in the final dossier. Furthermore, occasionally there is only one witness to a case, like Angiorellus, even if this did not accord with the regulations of canon law. The striving for judicial rigour may have been the reason for the absence

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[45] Nicholas of Tolentino (1245–1305) was an Augustinian friar of humble origin, born after his parents' invocation to his namesake, Nicholas of Bari. He was a familiar figure in Tolentino and had gained fame for his sanctity during his own lifetime. His canonization process was carried out in Tolentino and in several nearby towns of the Marches of Ancona. The commissioners were Federico, Bishop of Senigallia, and Tommaso di Cesena. The third commissioner, Ugolino, Abbot of Saint Peter's in Perugia, declined the duty because of his other commitments and the unpleasant weather. Thomas di Fermo, *lector* of the Augustinian friars of Tolentino, acted as consultant, proctor, agent, promoter, and messenger. The official recognition of Nicholas' sainthood took place in 1446 more than a century after the inquiry. *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, ed. by Nicola Occhioni (Rome: Padri Agostiniani Tolentino, École française de Rome, 1984).

[46] Ambrose of Massa (d. 1240) was a Franciscan friar known for his humility and asceticism. His canonization process was carried out in Orvieto. The implementation of the hearing was criticized by Pope Innocent IV for the quality of the depositions and the process had to be reopened in 1250. Ambrose was never canonized. André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 61–2, 80, 84, 392, 394. 'Processus canonizationis B. Ambrosii Massani,' *AASS*, Nov. IV, pp. 571–606.

[47] John Buoni (Giovanni Bono) (d. 1249) was an Italian hermit known for his asceticism; he was the founder of the congregation of the 'Zamboniti.' The implementation of the canonization hearing was criticized by Pope Innocent IV and a supplementary hearing into his faith was ordered in 1253. John was never canonized. Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 61–3. Donald S. Prudlo (*Certain Sainthood: Canonization and the Origins of Papal Infallibility in the Medieval Church* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), pp. 139–40) argues that this process reveals the new papal emphasis on religious orthodoxy. Even if John's fight against heretics and his love for the Eucharist were emphasized in the first process, this was apparently not enough. 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' *AASS*, Oct. IX, pp. 768–885 and 'Vita B. Joanne Bono,' *AASS*, Oct. IX, pp. 748–68.

[48] Vatican City, BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4027, ff. 27r–29r.

of cases of demonic possession in the official canonization process of Bernardino of Siena (1445, 1447, 1449), as in the aforementioned processes of Thomas Cantilupe and Louis of Toulouse. While registering the cases for the official canonization processes, a huge number of miracles were also recorded alongside the official dossier. In these less official miracle collections, seven cases of demonic possession, reflecting many typical Italian features, were recorded. Cases of demonic possession may have become problematic from the judicial point of view, but these cases testify to the participants' continuing need to define certain disorders as caused by demons as well as to persistent cultural traits relating to this phenomenon.[49]

As Birgitta's hearing shows and Italian material corroborates, the distinction between official canonization processes on the one hand and local hearings and miracle registers collected at a shrine on the other was not always marked. Therefore, miracle collections of lesser judicial rigour are also incorporated into the analysis to create a larger corpus of suitable cases. Collections with a special quantitative and qualitative focus on demonic presence are those of Zita of Lucca[50] (AD 1278), Ambrose of Siena[51] (AD 1287), and Gerard Gagnoli[52] (AD 1344–7). They were all local enterprises: Zita's miracles were registered by a notary and testimonies were given in front of a group of witnesses; Ambrose's hearing was ordered by the Bishop of Siena; and Gerard's collection was compiled by a fellow friar in Pisa.

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[49] According to Letizia Pellegrini, the reason for omitting certain types of miracles from the official dossier and focusing on cases from only certain geographical areas may have been the organizers' insecurity about the judicial requirements and their intention to secure a quick, positive outcome. Letizia Pellegrini, 'Testifying to Miracles,' pp. 105–27. For a transcription of the possession cases, see pp. 124–5.

[50] Zita (1212–72) was of humble origin; she was born near Lucca, and spent her life as a servant of the prominent Fatinelli family, who later controlled her cult. She was canonized in 1748. 'Miracula S. Zitae Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' *AASS* April. III, pp. 510–27. There are thirteen cases of demonic possession in her registers.

[51] Ambrose Sansedoni (d. 1287) was a Dominican friar, a Paris-educated preacher and diplomat of the noble Sansedoni family. He negotiated a reconciliation between the pope and Siena, his hometown, as well as between the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy. Odile Redon, 'Le bienhereux qui aimait les femmes. Ambrogio Sensedoni (1220–87),' in *La famille, les femmes et le quotidien (XIVe–XVIIIe siècle). Textes offerts à Christiane Klapich-Zuber*, ed. by Isabelle Chabot, Jérôme Hayez, and Didier Lett (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006), pp. 239–50. The hearing to collect his miracles was ordered by the Bishop of Siena soon after his death. Requests for opening an official canonization hearing were presented to the pope in the 1280s and 1290s by the Dominicans and the commune of Siena. Allegedly, the requests failed because Ambrose's family belonged to the Ghibelline faction. Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 82, 96. Michael Goodich, 'A Profile of Thirteenth-Century Sainthood,' reprinted in Michael Goodich, *Lives and Miracles of the Saints: Studies in Medieval Latin Hagiography* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2004), pp. 429–37. 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' *AASS*, Mart. III, pp. 210–41 and 'Vita B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' *AASS*, Mart. III, pp. 181–201: sixteen deliveries from demonic possession were listed under the heading *De manifeste vexatis a dæmone per B. Ambrosium liberates*.

[52] Gerard Cagnoli was a Franciscan friar in Pisa and in the 1340s, a fellow friar, Bartolomeus Albizi, compiled a collection of his miracles. 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli, O.Min. (1267–1342) di Fra Bartolomeo Albizi, O.Min († 1351),' ed. by Filippo Rotolo. *Miscellanea Francescana* LXVI (1966), pp. 128–92. The chapter *De liberatione a persecutoribus et potestate diaboli* consists of twenty-four cases.

Zita's registers were organized by date, and the two others according to miracle type, with cases being recorded chronologically under each heading.

In addition to this main corpus, other canonization processes from this era are consulted for comparative purposes in order to gain a fuller comprehension of the characteristics of this source material and the methodological questions it raises. Furthermore, the investigation into demonic presence and miraculous deliveries as evidence for sanctity continued on the curial level after the hearing *in partibus*. An analysis of abbreviations of the canonization records (*relatio* or *summarium*) reveals the judicial perspective of learned clergymen on the possession phenomenon itself and on lived religion at large. This material is also scrutinized on suitable occasions, but a curial examination is not preserved for each consulted process.[53]

Miracle collections with more didactic aims and clearly didactic material, that is exempla collections, are also analysed. Obviously, the 'pre-text filters' as well as the whole process of interpretation are different in this material; their deconstruction, that is the separation of different layers of source material, is one methodological tool for this examination. The lived experiences of the laity as they were expressed in the depositions of canonization processes are contrasted and compared with the more didactic material. The practical method utilized is the close reading of the rhetorical devices of the material and careful contextualization of each case and collection from cross-cultural and comparative perspectives. Rather than trying to find one all-encompassing idea of demonic presence, emphasis is here placed on a more nuanced analysis of various interpretations. The intention is not only to draw attention to the elements typical of the whole hagiographic genre, but also to contextualize the cases and ascertain the various motivations behind each case or collection. Geographically the book covers Western Europe and in particular compares Northern and Southern perceptions and customs, as suitable cases are especially numerous in Italian and Swedish material. The comparative perspective produces a fuller comprehension of demonic possession within lived religion and a more nuanced understanding of geographical and cultural differences relating to this phenomenon.

Structure of the Volume

The case recorded in the canonization process of Clare of Montefalco illuminates many typical features of both medieval cases of demonic possession and the themes to be explored in this book. First it shows that during the Middle Ages, demonic possession was a phenomenon ordinary enough for lay people to recognize and

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[53] See also Ronald Finucane, *Contested Canonizations: The Last Medieval Saints, 1482–1523* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011).

accept it as a diagnosis. At the same time, it was an extraordinary occurrence which attracted much attention, as Angiorellus testified. He described a combination of physical and mental symptoms as well as various possible reasons for possession. The victims were badly afflicted, not their normal selves, and their actions did not fit conventional modes of behaviour, in the opinion of people present. The diagnosis and treatments were a collective effort. As the victims were cured at the shrine of Clare, their deliveries also contributed to the construction of the sacred: to the sanctity of this local intercessor, to the sacredness of her relics, and to the general concept of the sacred as a constitutive element of the cosmology. A pilgrimage, especially in politically fractured Italy, was always also a politically charged act. Similarly, by venerating a certain saint, people were taking part in theological discussions; in Clare's case this meant refuting the accusations that her beliefs were heretical.

The ensuing chapters follow the logic and chronology of the phenomenon of demonic possession: first the causality behind possession is discussed; then communal responses to demonic presence are analysed; finally, the wider societal and cultural discussions the cases of demonic possession contributed to are dealt with. The first chapter seeks to establish whether a general pattern behind falling prey to demons can be found. Answers are sought by analysing the interconnection of religious and social reasoning found in the depositions. The rather down-to-earth and concrete explanations given by the laity, for example that possession came about by eating or drinking the demon, are contrasted and compared with the examples given in the didactic material, where questions about sin and punishment arise. As clear regional patterns governing lay perceptions can be detected, the comparison between Southern and Northern cases is of crucial importance in this chapter.

A punishing saint and malediction were acknowledged as underlining causalities for possession in all layers of society. They did not feature among the most typical explanations, though. Even if anyone could by their own actions render themselves under the influence of demons, certain people, by their very nature, were considered to be more vulnerable to demonic assaults. Demonic possession was not exclusively a feminine phenomenon, but women formed the majority of the victims. The second chapter explores the intersection of gender, demonic possession, and lived religion and focuses on the female body as the site for cultural and social anxieties. It takes up the stages of change in women's lives, in particular puberty, marriage, and childbirth, to ascertain whether women's physiology was given as an explanation for their preponderance among victims, and whether more general cultural anxieties attached to these corporeal functions and signposts in women's life course were reflected in cases of demonic possession.

As the examples in the first two chapters show, and as will be argued throughout the volume, a clear causality could not be established. Furthermore, deciding what diagnosis to attach to various conditions was no simple matter. By its very nature, demonic possession was a shared construction requiring collective negotiation.

In addition to the categorization of symptoms, communal collaboration and shared negotiations were crucial when coping with the affliction. The third chapter is dedicated to how communities responded to and treated victims. How and why the lines between demonic possession and mental illness were drawn is its central concern. The analysis of concrete responses, like searching for earthly doctors' help instead of or before invoking a saint, is supplemented by examining the emotional responses to the tribulation. The social significance of demonic possession is highlighted in discussions about the toleration of deviant behaviour, the marginalization of victims, and the potential for their reintegration. The interaction between the demonic and the sacred was a fundamental element in these cases. Therefore, making a contribution to the construction of the sacred was a major response on individual, communal, and cultural levels, as will be demonstrated in the fourth chapter. Sacred is here understood as something transient and fluid, in constant need of reaffirmation; it was not a fixed or permanent category. Demoniacs took part in this process of reiteration, for example, by engaging in a dialogue with the possessing spirit and naming either the tormentor or the heavenly intercessor predestined to drive it out. The acts of demons, as well as priests, were important in this process, but the ritual participation of the laity was likewise essential; by pilgrimages, rituals at the shrine, and bodily signs and sensory elements, they contributed to these negotiations, thus affirming the sacredness of the shrine, the sanctity of the local intercessor, and the defeat of the malign powers.

The third major theme is formed by the more general societal and cultural discussions of which the cases of demonic possession formed a part. In a social sense demonic possession was an affliction for the whole community, causing chaos and disorder. The communal nature of the phenomenon is further underlined by the need for collaboration in re-establishing peace and harmony. Therefore, cases were intimately linked with other communal issues and could also contain politically charged messages. Demons, and their words, could be used in the sociopolitical milieu as a conscious rhetorical tool for propagandistic purposes. Both the clergy and laity could engage in this. By linking the tormenting spirits with the political adversaries of a region or group, demonic possession became a device for creating collective identity and forming the boundaries of a cultic community, as is shown in the fifth chapter. Here, the comparative analysis between Southern and Northern material becomes prominent again. The sixth chapter returns to the analysis of gender, this time from the perspective of the interconnection between female sexuality and the demonic. Corporeal penetration was part of becoming possessed, and therefore the phenomenon had sexual connotations. Examples in the canonization processes do not only repeat the clerical view of female promiscuity but also testify to wider sociocultural concerns, such as the need for proper order, for proper ritual practice, and for the enhancement of social hierarchies. Demonic sex could also be used as a tool: it was an element

in propagating the sanctity of a saint and in expressing issues that caused cultural anxiety, like the uncontrollability of inner spirituality.

The main argument developed throughout is that demonic possession was a social phenomenon which should be understood with regard to the community and culture. Each set of sources formed its own specific context, in which demonic presence was derived from different motivations, reasonings, and methods of categorization. Rituals, gestures, emotions, and sensory elements in constructing demonic presence reveal negotiations over authority and agency. With the lived religion approach it is, however, possible to question the hierarchy between the 'learned' and 'popular' within religion; it also enables the avoidance of a strict polarity between individual and collective religious participation. Cases of demonic possession reveal how the personal affected the communal, and vice versa, and how they were eventually transformed into discourses and institutions of the Church; that is, definitions of the miraculous and the diabolical. All this, in turn, calls for a critical evaluation of the concept of 'medieval Europe' and refutes the way in which it can still be used to denote a single, coherent unity.

2

Reasons for Possession

Perilous People, Hazardous Places

Demonic possession was a social construction, a process requiring collective negotiation. It was a spiritual state which had physical and social symptoms and outcomes. Demonic presence exposed the boundaries of normalcy, the limits of human power, and the hierarchies within the supernatural. In the social context, demoniacs had stepped beyond the bounds of proper conduct and manifested various anomalies in their bodies and actions. The alterity of a demoniac was a behavioural, spiritual, and physical deviance; demonic possession defined proper social order, health, and spiritual purity by being their antithesis.[1]

Demons could lurk everywhere, and Christians could be possessed simply because demons had superior powers compared to them and because demons were inherently evil. The victims were taken over by a malevolent spirit that was more powerful than them. Among the theologians and a large medieval corpus of learned pondering that focused on the acts and powers of demons, there was a general consensus that God had permitted the acts of demons, and they could work only by his permission; the disputed detail was whether God had given malign spirits a general licence to test Christians or special permission to vex certain persons.[2]

Typically, the possessed in canonization processes were not seen as responsible for their actions during the affliction; quite often they were regarded as innocent victims of malevolent supernatural forces.[3] This contrasts with both didactic

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[1] Collective and personal identity, and alterity as an inalienable element of identity formation, are socially produced and not static constituents; rather, they are characterized by fluidity of boundary maintenance. Deviance is defined differently in each society. On structural and/or cultural approaches to alterity, see, for example, Gerd Baumann, 'Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach,' in *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach*, ed. by Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), pp. 18–50 and Silke Horstkotte and Esther Peeren, eds., *The Shock of the Other: Situating Alterities* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007). See also John H. Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (London: Hodder Education, 2005), pp. 118–24.

[2] On discussions of the Devil's powers in medieval theology, folklore, and literature, see Jeffrey Burton Russel, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 206 *et passim*.

[3] Cf., however, Florence Chave-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés dans l'Église d'Occident (Xe–XIVe siècle)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 16, 198 *et passim*, who quotes cases where sin was a prerequisite for possession; see pp. 38–47 for interconnection of medicial and religious explanations. Linking of illnesses and impairments with sins was rare and the connection, especially in depositions of canonization

material, such as exempla, where sinners were duly punished and often by demons, and with witchcraft accusations, where the blame was put on someone else, the victim him- or herself being regarded innocent. To analyse how demonic possession crossed between various levels—those of individual experiences, social dynamics, and cultural expectations—it is crucial first to analyse the causality behind the condition. In this chapter, the focus will be on reasons given for falling prey to demons; if and how certain behaviour, acts, and places were dangerous and threatening in this respect. Personal culpability was more readily found as an explanation for possession in didactic material, yet it was not given as an automatic causality. Questions of guilt do not stand out in the depositions and often no causes for possession were offered. The comparison of urban Northern Italy and rural Scandinavia, the extreme poles of late medieval Europe in many respects, is crucial for the analysis in this chapter as many cases suitable for closer analysis were recorded in these areas. As the examples from canonization processes show, a generally accepted pattern of causality did not exist since local traditions as well as cultural and environmental differences played a role in explaining the reasons for demonic threat.

Someone to Blame?

Being possessed by a malign spirit was a tragedy which could leave a taint, even a stigma. The interconnection of demonic harassment or possession and personal culpability was a complex matter, though, since such experiences could also be seen as evidence of a virtuous, even saintly life. 'The Lord trieth the righteous' (Psalm 11:5); the Biblical exemplar of a righteous man being plagued by demons was Job. In early Christian tradition, the desert fathers were a specific target of demonic harassment. Even if demons continued to harass saints during the Middle Ages, the approach changed; demonic harassment was no longer a crucial manifestation of saintly life. In the miracles recorded in canonization processes, demonic harassment or possession was not a test of virtue and lay members of society formed the large majority of victims. The innocence or at least inculpability of the possessed was a constant, yet much-discussed, trait. This is exemplified by the early thirteenth-century author, Caesar of Heisterbach. In his treatise for Cistercian novices, *Dialogue on Miracles (Dialogus Miraculorum)*, he stated that a

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processes, vague. See also Naama Cohen-Hanegbi, *Caring for the Living Soul: Emotions, Medicine and Penance in the Late Medieval Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 144–5, 196–9 and Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Interaction*, pp. 82–105. On Biblical examples, see Johannes Dillinger, 'Beelzebulstreitigkeiten. Besessenheit in der Bibeln,' in *Dämonische Besessenheit*, pp. 37–62.

malign spirit could not enter Christians' souls and hearts, but only their bodies; they were dwelling amidst the filth in the entrails.[4]

Personal characteristics could make some persons weaker and more vulnerable to demonic harassment. Theologians in late antiquity claimed that excessive joy, sorrow, or love opened the minds of people for demons to gain lodgement. Intemperance was an important element in this process.[5] Many emotions, such as envy and hatred, were also considered sins. Modesty and self-control were cultural ideals, and maintaining behavioural and cultural boundaries was of crucial importance. Rupturing them could also crack open the mind and body of the offender for demons. Transgressing against Christian values can be found as an explanation for late medieval demonic possession, particularly in didactic miracle collections; some of the possessed were punished specifically for their sins. A similar approach can also be found in the legal context for the mentally ill; most likely it emerged from ecclesiastical sources.[6]

In the late Middle Ages, the debate concerning demonic powers intensified, leading to a growth in demonology, the emergence of witchcraft trials, and the birth of witch panics. In the early modern era, the possessed were more often seen as having willingly submitted to the Devil, or, if they were innocent themselves, they were seen as victims of another person's malediction or bewitchment. Furthermore, finding something or somebody to blame for personal misfortune was a crucial element in witchcraft accusations.[7] Occasionally, similar reasoning can be found in medieval cases of demonic possession: they can involve innocent victims and somebody else's blameworthy actions.

A case in point is Cristina; a two-year-old infant who was suddenly and without warning possessed by a demon while lying in her cradle. We learn of the case from a letter of the Bishop of Linköping, who was an eager promoter of Birgitta's canonization; the letter was attached to the canonization records. According to him, Cristina was severely infected, her stomach swollen, her whole body stiff, and her back arched. Other signs of demonic presence are not given and it

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[4] 'Non potest esse diabolus in anima humana. […] Cum diabolus dicitur esse in hominem, non intelligendum est de anima, sed de corpore, quia in concavitatibus eius et in visceribus ubi stercora continentur, et ipse esse potest.' Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, 15. Cf. Turner, *Care and Custody of the Mentally Ill*, pp. 23–4 for Anglo-Saxon examples.

[5] Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft: The Development of Christian Beliefs in Evil Spirits* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 35. See also Cohen-Hanegbi, *Caring for the Living Soul*, p. 108 for medical considerations of excessive emotions leading to mental disorders, like folly.

[6] Turner, *Care and Custody*, pp. 28–9. Her analysis is based on legal material from medieval England; according to her, this two-sided approach had a wider influence on the treatment of the mentally incapacitated. Medical and religious discourses were in many ways connected, especially through emotions, also when discussing mental problems. See Cohen-Hanegbi, *Caring for the Living Soul*.

[7] On explanatory theories in witchcraft historiography with critical discussion, see Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Society*. On blaming others for being possessed, see also Philip Almond, *Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and Their Cultural Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 43–52; 71–82. For changes in the historiography, see also Nenonen and Toivo, eds., *Writing Witch-Hunt Histories*.

remains unknown how the definition was made. Cristina's parents, frightened by the great pain she was in, decided to make a vow on her behalf to Saint Birgitta and accordingly send an oblation to the shrine. After the invocation, the girl became better; the pain was relieved but the child was not completely cured, and yet the parents did not fulfil their promise. After seven weeks, the pain started to increase again and the mother vowed to carry her daughter to the shrine in her arms. Once again the pain eased, but the mother did not bother to fulfil her promise for another seven weeks, as the Bishop of Linköping estimated.[8]

The case fits quite unproblematically into the pattern of a punishment miracle: the unfulfilled promise caused a relapse in the girl. Saints were eager to punish forgetful petitioners in this manner. This type of miracle had emerged already in the hagiography of late antiquity. The punishment miracle was not only a literary topos, but so well grounded in the culture that even lay witnesses could fit their personal experiences within this frame.[9] This case does, however, contain clear didactic elements in addition to the emphasis on the saint's ability to avenge disrespect. In Christian symbolism the number seven symbolizes virginity,[10] thus this detail may have been a way for the Bishop of Linköping to further emphasize the innocence of the infant Cristina and put the blame on her parents. The twists and turns of the case took place in intervals of seven weeks; the parents had this period of grace to act piously, and only then did Birgitta enact her punishment.

Even if the parents were not to blame for the original affliction, their inadequate reverence worsened the situation, making this an affliction for the whole family. As Cristina was baptized but only two years old, she was, according to the majority of medieval theories, free from original sin and still unable to sin herself. The case emphasizes the responsibility of parents and especially the need to respect heavenly intercessors: it was a grave sin to leave the vow unfulfilled.[11] Smaller parental mistakes could also have similar outcomes; an outburst of anger could have been enough. It is uncertain whether the father watching his daughter eagerly drinking milk and reprimanding her by saying that the child would drink a devil into her

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[8] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 176–7. For a similar case, a child being punished for her parents' disbelief in the sanctity of Charles of Blois, see BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, ff. 121r–128r. For further analysis of the case, see Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Narrative Strategies in the Depositions: Gender, Family and Devotion,' in *Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes*, pp. 227–56.

[9] On punishment miracles, see Gábor Klaniczay, 'Miracoli di punizione e *maleficia*,' in *Miracoli. Dai segni alla storia*, ed. by Sofia Boesch Gajano and Marilena Modica (Rome: Viella, 2000), pp. 109–36 and Paolo Golinelli, *Il medioevo degli increduli. Miscredenti, beffatori, anticlericali* (Milan: Mursia, 2009), pp. 67–73 and 90–3.

[10] Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 22.

[11] The Latin word *votum* includes a prayer to and invocation of a saint as well as the promise made to the saint. The petitioner was obliged to the saint once invoked. See also Laura Ackerman Smoller, 'Miracle, Memory, and Meaning in the Canonization of Vincent Ferrer, 1453–1454,' *Speculum* 73 (1998): 429–54, esp. p. 430. If one failed to fulfil the vow, one was obliged to seek absolution from the sin from the papal see. On this kind of supplication in a papal penitentiary, Kirsi Salonen, *The Penitentiary as a Well of Grace in the Late Middle Ages: The Example of the Province of Uppsala 1448–1527* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2001), pp. 153–6.

belly in that manner would have been considered guilty of malediction. According to Caesar of Heisterbach, a child was, nonetheless, possessed on such an occasion.[12] This was not only a warning not to mention the Devil, for mentioning him equalled calling out for him, but the case also reflects parental anxiety. In a society of high child mortality, children's lives were fragile, and fear for the survival of a child may have been constantly on parents' minds.[13] Fathers and mothers had great power over their children's life and fate and could risk their offspring's salvation by their own actions. The power of parents and their responsibilities may have been frightening, not only for the children, but also for the parents themselves. After all, the sins of the parents could be visited upon their children (Ex. 20:5). Blaming parents for demonic possession may have been a reflection of such fears.

Caesar's tale was an exemplum, a short tale containing a simple moral lesson. Exempla were typically used in preaching to catch the attention of the audience, to educate, and to entertain. Depositions in canonization processes were recorded for other purposes, but a similar reasoning can be found: for example, an angry mother lost her temper with her daughter when the girl responded to her in an inappropriate manner. The mother cursed her daughter, who became possessed, but was later cured at the shrine of Saint Ambrose of Siena.[14] The power of the spoken word was strong; words made things happen. Thus it followed that a promise given to a saint was binding, that it was disgraceful and disreputable to give a malediction to one's own child, and that it was thus particularly perilous to call out the Devil; anyone doing such things could be blamed for the possession.[15]

Malediction as a reason for possession is not regularly found in the depositions or more didactic hagiographic material, even if very mild incentives seem to have been enough to render a person a victim of demonic assaults. A quarrel in a queue

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[12] 'Die quadam cum lac manducaret pater eius iratus dixit: diabolum comedas in ventrem tuum. Mox puellula sensit eius ingressum et usque at maturam aetatem ab illo vexata.' Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, 26; see also V, 11 for an example of an angry husband snapping at his wife: 'Go to the Devil—Vade diabolo,' and this happened. For the Devil in a glass of milk, see Thomas of Pavia (de Papia), *Dialogus de gestis sanctorum fratrum minorum*, ed. by Ferdinandus M. Delorme O.F. M. (Quaracchi—Florence: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1923), pp. 246–7.

[13] According to some estimates, infant mortality varied between 30 and 50 per cent in the Middle Ages; see Barbara Hanawalt, 'Medievalists and the Study of Childhood,' *Speculum* 77 (2002): 440–60.

[14] 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237.

[15] For other examples of parental malediction, see Lett, *L'enfant des miracles*, pp. 68–9. See also 'Enquête pour la canonisation de saint Yves (èdifie à Tréguer en l'an 1350),' in *Monuments originaux de l'histoire de Saint Yves*, ed. by A. J. D de la Borderie, R. F. Perquis, and D. Temper (Saint Brieuc: L. Prud'homme, 1887), *testis* CXC–CXCV, pp. 257–62 for a mother cursing her nineteen-year-old son and a malediction leading to a demonic possession. The case is further analysed from the point of view of authority and its social significance, of defaming and malediction and their judicial reliability, in Alain Boureau, *Satan hérétique. Histoire de la démologie (1280–1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), pp. 159–61; as the combat between God and the Devil in Goodich, *Violence and Miracle*, pp. 78–9; and as a reflection of problems in the socialization process of a child in Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Socialization Gone Astray? Children and Demonic Possession in the Later Middle Ages,' in *Dark Side of Childhood in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. by Katariina Mustakallio and Christian Laes (Oxford: Oxbow, 2011), pp. 95–112. On binding words in invocations, see Gábor Klaniczay, 'The Inquisition of Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes,' in *Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes*, pp. 43–73.

at a well and an offensive remark, 'drink the water, and a thousand demons will enter your body,'[16] may have sufficed. In this respect medieval cases of demonic possession are in clear contrast to the later witchcraft trials. Other people's malice was not a major motivation or explanation for demonic possession. Fear of envy and malice, though, have often been seen as incentives for witchcraft accusations. Cultural and communal tensions and quarrels are reflected in cases of demonic possession as well, but the logic in hagiographic material was different. Finding someone responsible for the negative incidents was essential in witchcraft accusations, as they were fundamentally a way to act out social tensions, fears, and ill feelings.[17] Finding someone to blame for the misfortune was not the main aim in delivery miracles; rather, it was to give proof of the protective powers of heavenly intercessors. On some occasions, these two features were, however, combined.

A peculiar moral failure including self-cursing can be found in the canonization process of Nicholas of Linköping, Sweden, in 1417. Johannes Karoli, a parish priest from Skäninge, Sweden, was once sitting at a table in his house with three of his chaplains. He started to blaspheme the saints and especially Nicholas of Linköping, saying:

> By the death of Jesus Christ I do not care about Gangulph, Nicholas, Peter, Paul, or Andreas. I do not want their fellowship or company: I lent Nicholas a lot of money when I was in his service and I never received it back and I do not wish for it, either. I have many times made and fulfilled a vow to him to regain my health but I have always ended up frustrated. Let it be up to the Devil, then, what is going to happen to me in the future.

He was miserably afflicted and fell to the ground in anguish. After a while, he got up stammering that he saw a multitude of big black dogs around him. Johannes was violent and started to curse people around him. The chaplains were terrified and made a humble vow to Saint Nicholas. Immediately, Johannes stopped and woke up as though from a dream.[18] While the canonization records do not clearly label Johannes Karoli as a demoniac, he manifested the typical symptoms of demonic possession by blaspheming saints and insulting his fellows. Furthermore, in the

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[16] 'Bibe de aqua, quod intrent mille demones corpus tuum.' 'Processus canonizationis B. Ambrosii Massani,' pp. 594–5.

[17] Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender*; see also Annabel Gregory, 'Witchcraft, Politics and "Good Neighbourhood" in Early Seventeenth-Century Rye,' *Past and Present* 133 (1991): 31–66.

[18] 'Per mortem Ihesu Cristi, ego non curo de Gangulpho neque de Nicolao neque de Petro siue Paolo uel Andrea nec de eorum consorcio seu societate me de cetero intromittam, ego enim magnam pecuniam mutuam domino Nicolao quondam episcopo Lincopensi per tempus et tempora quibus sibi seruiuj quam numquam rehabui nec me rehabiturum vnquam spero. Pluries eciam sibi feci votum et factum compleui pro sanitate mea recuperanda, sed semper optata circa eum et alios fueram spe frustratus. Curet ergo inquit infortunium dyaboli quid aut quale mihi futuri euenerit.' *Processus canonizacionis beati Nicolai Lincopensis*, pp. 362–4.

medieval imagination black animals, especially dogs, and even black inanimate objects were typical material forms of demons, since blackness, sin, death, and damnation were linked together.[19]

Johannes Karoli refers to his frustration in his relationship with Nicholas while the latter was still alive as well as to the failure of Nicholas' thaumaturgical powers. For Johannes Karoli, Nicholas of Linköping was a saint, but an ineffective patron; he, like other saints, was unable or unwilling to help him. His displeasure was based on his personal experience, not on a general distrust of saintly powers. Johannes invoked the Devil by saying his name and submitting to him. Hence the possession or the harassment was an appropriate punishment. It was rather a lenient one, however, since the affliction was short-term; he recovered soon, thanks to the invocation made by his apparently more steadfast-in-faith fellow clergymen.

Johannes Karoli had truly brought a misfortune upon himself; from this perspective, he deserved his fate. Demons could declare sentence of just punishment, even for lesser misdemeanours; in such cases, the ones to suffer from demonic assaults were usually the transgressors themselves. Such examples are, however, rarely found in the depositions, as they seem to belong to the realm of collections with strong didactic overtones.[20] In the *Vitae fratrum,* an account of the lives of early Dominicans, for example, a friar was possessed when he had without licence eaten meat reserved for sick friars. The demon explained that he had entered the friar for a reason: the friar had broken the rules of the Dominicans. As this was a *miracula in vita*, Saint Dominic exorcized the malign spirit by saying, 'by the authority of God, I absolve him and in the name of Jesus Christ I command you to exit and stop vexing him.' By rescuing him, Saint Dominic also underlined the friar's sin. Recounted in the same collection was also the fate of another friar, who was also possessed after drinking wine without proper permission and without the sign of the cross (*sine licencia et sine signo crucis*). The demon argued that he was tormenting the friar for his actions since he deserved it (*vexo eum quia meruit*).[21] An educative aspect is emphasized in these cases; the demons knew of the hidden sins and could punish transgressions. The narrations

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[19] Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 33. Demons were depicted as black and referred to as 'Ethiopians' already in the earliest hagiography and Christian exempla.

[20] For example, Birgitta's miracles registered by the Swedish clergy contain several examples of such cases. See *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 110, 112 (three cases), 113, 115, 124, 127; also 176–7. The most vivid example of demons carrying out the punishment for disrespecting Birgitta may be that of Hans Smek, which is analysed in detail in Chapter 6. Cf. 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 236.

[21] 'Dixit autem dyabolus: Intravi in eum quia meruit: nam carnis infirmorum occulte et sine licentia comedebat contra ordinacionem constitucionum tuarum. Tunc beatus Dominicus ait: ego auctoritate Dei absolvo eum a peccato quod fecit. Tibi autem, demon praecipio in nomine Domini Jhesu Christi: ut exeas ab eo et a modo non vexes eum. Statimque liberatus est.' Gerardus de Fracheto O.P., *Vitae fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum, necnon Chronica ordinis ab anno MCCIII usque ad MCCLIV*, ed. by Benedictus Maria Reichert O.P. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1897), pp. 81, 198–9. *Vitae fratrum* was compiled in the 1250s and constructed from the material collected by the order

did not only present moral condemnation. The more important message was the construction of hierarchy—the illicit use of wine or meat was not the main transgression; rather, it was the disrespect for the rules of the Dominicans. The rhetoric of this didactic compilation underlines the capacity of Saint Dominic to act in the name of God and drive out malign spirits, like Jesus did.

From a theological perspective all Christians could deserve demonic harassment; demons worked only with God's permission and every Christian was, at least potentially, a sinner. Obviously, personal sin and guilt were used in didactic material to divert people from the path of sin, but the causality behind demonic possession in these cases underlined other messages, like propagating the power of a saint, hierarchy within an order, or the clergy's position.

The testimonies of lay witnesses show that they acknowledged that certain moral transgressions could render people more vulnerable to demonic attacks. This is reflected particularly in punishment miracles, since saints could command demons to carry out the chastisement. Sin, punishment, and malediction were not, however, recurrent themes in the depositions concerning demonic possession. The question of the victims' culpability was not a major concern; inquisitorial committees did not consider the victim's (or somebody else's) culpability or the moral causality behind the possession as evidence for a miracle, and so they did not pose questions of this sort. The witnesses did not offer moral ponderings as background motivation, either. On occasion, witnesses were willing to offer an explanation for the chain of events, though. Then their intention was not to blame someone for the misfortune but rather to exculpate themselves by underlining the haphazard logic behind the phenomenon: an ill-fated foodstuff or beverage could have been enough.

Dangerous Food, Risky Beverages

One did not necessarily need to consume the wrong kind food or beverage, like the aforementioned Dominicans, to become possessed, since the sole act of eating and drinking could be dangerous. These acts opened the body's boundaries, and a demon could then get inside; this was a rather common mechanism in becoming possessed. A well-known example of this rationale was given by Gregory the Great and later re-told by Jacques de Vitry: a hungry nun devoured a lettuce without making the sign of the cross and happened to swallow a demon simultaneously. Once exorcized, the demon complained of being held responsible; he explained that the reason for the possession was that the nun had not crossed herself before

of General Chapters. Simon Tugwell, 'L'évolution des *Vitae fratrum*. Résumé des conclusions provisoires,' in *L'ordre des Prêcheurs et son histoire en France méridionale* (Toulouse: Privat, 2001), pp. 415–18.

eating. All the demon did was sit on the lettuce.[22] In her case, the reason seemed to have been insufficient ritual practice,[23] not disrespect for regulations or the sin of gluttony.

The narration of the hungry nun encapsulates many recurrent trends: demonic possession was a very concrete phenomenon; the demon literally got inside the body and exited in the delivery. Similar ideas of trespassing corporeal or household boundaries can be found in later magical practices. In the process of bewitchment, the misfortune was something concrete, yet symbolic, brought inside the person or household.[24] From this perspective, the cases of demonic possession and bewitchment follow a similar logic: the evil was an outer force, not inherent in the victim, and hence it could be got rid of as well.

Sometimes it was not only the act of eating or drinking but also the substance that was harmful. Water, for example, was potentially dangerous as it could hide malign creatures.[25] In the Christian faith, water was typically seen as a positive ingredient because of its healing and benedictional abilities. Holy water was important for several rituals, as it was used in purifying souls and spaces. It was an essential element in the sacrament of baptism, which literally washed away the original sin of Christians. Water in the form of tears was a sign of contrition for evil deeds: 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted' (Matt. 5:4).[26] Water from a shrine was one of the most typical secondary relics. Despite its apotropaic abilities, water was an ambiguous element and could also be poisonous and carry evil elements. Tertullian, for one, recommended the exorcism of the baptismal water and vessel before their use, since unclean spirits settle upon water.[27]

These theological ideas seem to have been confirmed in lived experience. In the mid-thirteenth century in Mantua, Benghipace was outside the city and drank

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[22] 'Que est culpa mea, quid feci, quare me compellis? Ego super lactucam sedebam et ipsam non signavit et ideo cum lactuca me comedit.' Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla or illustrative stories from the sermones vulgares*, ed. by Thomas Frederick Crane (London: Folk-lore society, David Nutt, 1890), CXXX, p. 59.

[23] For protective rituals, gestures, and items, like uses of crosses, the sign of the cross, and holy water in everyday rituals and discussion concerning their superstitious nature, see Michael D. Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 175–9.

[24] On a general level, for transgression of boundaries leading to pollution and 'matter in a wrong place,' Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1984 [1966]).

[25] See 'Miracula beati Laurentii Dubliciensis archiepiscopi,' Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 1367, f. 113v, for a woman who miraculously recovered from poisoning: on a hot day she swallowed a spider with water.

[26] The gift of tears could be seen as a virtue or as charisma. See Piroska Nagy, *Le don des larmes au Moyen Âge. Un instrument spirituel en quête d'institution (Ve–XIIe siècle)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000), pp. 22–4. On water in blessings, Derek A. Rivard, *Blessing the World: Ritual and Lay Piety in Medieval Religion* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009). Many wells and springs were connected with saints and their cults, like Fontetecta, outside Arrezzo. Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 100–2. On healing wells, see also Birgitte Caulier, *L'eau et le sacré: les cultes thérapeutiques autour des fontaines en France* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1990).

[27] On spiritually polluted waters, see Rivard, *Blessing the World*, pp. 227–8.

from a well. Immediately, she felt sad and burdened, nearly out of her mind. She returned home confused, as she described the situation. The registrars and other witnesses to the case were clear on the matter: Satan had entered into her while she drank the well water.[28] A similar case was that of Guerula, who was invaded by a demon on her way to a well in Mantua.[29] Both of them recovered after the intercession of John Buoni. In Siena, Joanna was seized by a demon while fetching water, and as a consequence she sat by the well laughing and spitting in the faces of passers-by. The personal and social disturbance was quietened after an invocation to Ambrose of Siena.[30] Yet another example was recorded in the Life of Saint Francis: a man called Petrus drank from a spring while he was on a pilgrimage to Puglia and consumed demons with the water.[31]

These cases reflect general fears not only of spiritual pollution but also of physical poisoning. Concerns about murky, smelly, and unhealthy water were expressed already in the early Middle Ages, and the connection between poor water and poor health was known. Murky and smelly water was understood to cause health problems and it was occasionally seen as a divine punishment.[32] Medieval medical treatises could condemn drinking water since it enticed phantasms and caused inebriation; according to humoral theory, water and other 'wet' substances were linked with the arousal of the senses and provocation to excess. The safety and purity of water was a crucial concern for medieval people, evidence of which can also be seen in the accusations of poisoning wells. Such claims are known from different periods and they were often prompted by social criteria of otherness and purity.[33]

Demons swallowed with water are met in Italian hagiography, and this is not mere coincidence. Issues concerning the quantity and quality of drinking water were crucial for community survival; in Italian cities rapid urban growth put

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[28] 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' pp. 882–3; 'Vita B. Joanne Bono,' p. 767.

[29] 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' pp. 778–9.   [30] 'Vita B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 199.

[31] Thomas of Celano, 'Vita prima sancti Francisci,' in *Legendae S. Francisci Assisiensis saeculis XIII et XIV conscriptae ad codicum fidem recensitae a patribus collegii*, ed. by Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi-Firenze: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1926–41), pp. 5–115, here p. 108.

[32] Patricia Skinner, *Health and Medicine in Early Medieval Southern Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 30; Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 117, 137 and Nancy Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), pp. 95, 168–9, 184–7. For unclean water as a punishment for relic theft, see Paolo Squatriti, *Water and Society in Early Medieval Italy, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 36–8. On disputes concerning pure water between health-concerned friars and townsfolk in Southern Europe, see Angela Montfort, *Health, Sickness, Medicine and the Friars in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1988), pp. 47–51.

[33] Squatriti, *Water and Society*, pp. 39–40. Often Jews and lepers were groups facing such accusations. Michael R. McVaugh, *Medicine before the Plague: Practitioners and Their Patients in the Crown of Aragon 1285–1345* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 220–2; Jon Arrizabalaga, 'Facing the Black Death: Perceptions and Reactions of University Medical Practitioners,' in *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, ed. by Luis García-Ballester et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 237–88.

pressure on the traditional means of water supply and this led to social tensions. Many wealthier households had their own cistern or well in their yard for security reasons, and there were also many common wells shared by a small number of households. In Italy, the use of water accentuated social hierarchies and made social relations more complex. Disputes over the right to use water could lead to conflict over, for instance, who had the right to use the water from a well, or who was obliged to fund its maintenance.[34] All these elements made water as such and wells in particular potential media for social tensions, which may have been reflected in seeing such places as spiritually contaminating and interpreting misbehaviour as demonic possession.

The demons dwelling in drinking water underline the links between and even inseparable nature of the corporeal, the spiritual, and the social. Cases connected with water supply demonstrate how the participants explained social tensions by religious means: not all social conflicts were explained by demons, but demonic presence was linked with the social. Demons in drinking water were an essentially Italian urban phenomenon, showing the way local conflicts were embodied in demoniacs. They made socially shared values and fears visible and tangible. Offering a concrete causality for the upheaval could also make the underlying multifaceted social disputes remediable.

Not only water as a substance but also the wells themselves could be considered dangerous. They were openings in the ground descending from the surface to hidden and mysterious depths; they were liminal spaces between the inhabited community and the depths of the earth and potentially inhabited by demons and malevolent creatures. Borders between populated areas and nature were the dwelling places of malevolent spirits, and moving from one sphere to another, crossing the very threshold, could have been dangerous and a cause of spiritual peril.[35]

Dangers of the Wilderness

Urban space gave a specific flavour to many Italian cases of demonic possession. However, medieval authors considered the Devil's powers to be more prevalent in rural areas: caves, distant forests, springs, and rivers were places haunted by demons.[36] In addition to remote, uninhabited, and unfamiliar places, borders

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[34] Squatriti, *Water and Society*, pp. 23–7. See also Roberta Magnusson and Paolo Squatriti, 'The Technologies of Water in Medieval Italy,' in *Working with Water in Medieval Europe. Technology and Resource-Use*, ed. by Paolo Squatriti (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 217–65, esp. pp. 241–4.

[35] For wells as a residence for demons, see *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 142. 'Ad processum de vita et miraculis B. Petri de Luxemburgo,' in *AASS*, Jul. I, pp. 525–607, here cap. CLXX, p. 506. On liminal places, Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 50.

[36] Michael Goodich, 'Battling the Devil in Rural Europe: Late Medieval Miracle Collections,' in *La christianisation des campagnes. Actes du colloque de C.I.H.E.C. (25–27 août 1994)*, tome I, ed. by J.-P. Massaut and M.-E. Henneau (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 139–52.

between populated areas and nature—that is, land, water, and forests on the outskirts of cities—were potential places for possession. Often rivers marked the limits of a city, delineating the border between nature and culture. The liminality of rivers is of ancient origin. They were the dwelling places of gods and spirits, which made these places powerful and potentially dangerous. Bridges in particular were sacred, liminal places, as they connected two spheres. This could be understood concretely, as a border between different regions and ownership, or metaphorically, between this world and that of spirits and gods.[37]

Nancy Caciola argues that possessions in a liminal space reflect an idea in folk belief: innocent victims were possessed by chance just for being too close to malevolent spirits that were not necessarily or clearly of demonic origin but linked to nature.[38] This argument is examined in detail later to find out whether it reveals a wider lay perception of demonic powers. Many Italian cases seem to corroborate it. The dangerous liminality of a river bank is emphasized, for example, in a miracle of Saint Giles from the 1260s. A girl from Perugia was in the habit of going to the Tiber, sitting by the river, and walking along it. Once, after spending an hour there, a horrible disease (*infirmitas quaedam horrenda multum*) gripped her: she fell to the ground and pulled her mouth inside out. She saw demons and tried to throw herself into water and fire. She also had the most telling signs of demonic possession: the abhorrence of sacred things, and she did not let herself be signed by the cross. The malady struck her seven or even ten times a day.[39] The innocence of the girl in relation to the affliction is underlined: no mention of sinful behaviour was recorded and her habit of strolling by the river was offered as an explanation. This case seems to fit nicely into the aforementioned pattern: an innocent victim fell prey to demons on the outskirts of an inhabited area, close to untamed wilderness.

At the end of the fourteenth century, Nicholaus Rike, a *famulus* of a nobleman in Sweden, was riding at Eastertime with King Albert's knights close to Uppsala when he fell into a wild river. This was no ordinary accident, though. He was dragged by the Devil (*raptus est a diabolo*) into the depths. He was both possessed and physically captured. The reason for this was not the liminal space of a river bank, but the liminal status of his soul: Nicholaus Rike had not made his confession for two years. Therefore, it was suspected (*cui ergo dubium*) that the Devil tried to

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[37] The sacredness of bridges, and particularly of those building them, is seen in the vocabulary of priests. The highest priest in Ancient Rome was the greatest builder of bridges, the *pontifex maximus* (*pontem facere*), a title later used for the popes. Peter Dinzelbacher, 'Il ponte come luogo sacro nella realtà e nell'immaginario,' in *Luoghi sacri e spazi della santità*, ed. by Sofia Boesch Gajano and Lucetta Scaraffia (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990), pp. 51–60.

[38] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 50.

[39] 'De signis & miraculis, quæ Dominus ostendit per B. Fratrem Ægidium,' *AASS*, April III, pp. 243–77, here p. 244. Saint Giles (Aegidius) of Assisi/Perugia was one of the first disciples of Saint Francis. The miracles were recorded in the 1260s. See also 'De Sancta Clara Virgine. Vita auctore anonymo coævo,' in *AASS* Aug II, pp. 754–68, here p. 766 for another similar case including affliction at a river bank.

drown him to carry off his soul to hell.[40] Nicholaus Rike was interrogated the following June when he visited Vadstena. Nevertheless, this is one the cases in Birgitta's process which was subject to heavy interpretation by the local clergy. Their intention was not to argue for the spiritual perils lurking in the wilderness but to make manifest the proper order of things: the laity should respect the Church's regulations, like confessing one's sins yearly, since malevolent spirits could harass them anywhere. The importance of annual confession is further underlined by the timing of the incident: Easter was the typical time for the laity to attend church and receive the Eucharist; confession was a prerequisite for it.

Freely running water and other liminal spaces were not, however, regular features in possession cases: possessions in the wilderness were rare and the location was not offered as an explanation. This holds true also for the Nordic hagiographic material, even if uninhabited areas formed a frequent venue for other types of miracles. The cases including forests show that wilderness was not considered to pose a spiritual threat. For example, cases of children lost in the woods are prominent in Nordic hagiographic material, while such cases are mainly absent in the canonization processes from Central or Southern Europe.[41] In these cases, the dangers inherent are always, however, the wild beasts, not the malevolent supernatural creatures that potentially dwell in the forests; these cases are not linked with demonic possession. For example, when seven-year-old Helena got lost in the woods near modern-day Pedersöre, Finland in 1375 or thereabouts, the situation was perilous. According to the records of Birgitta's miracles, she was in a dense forest with the wildest beasts, like bears, wolves, and various kinds of snakes.[42] Those who were lost and miraculously found in the Nordic material were always children, and large forests posed a real threat for them. The extent and danger of uninhabited forests was not only a way to follow the demands of the hagiographic genre and underline the desperate situation before the arrival of divine aid, but it also reflected the actual situation in Northern Europe.

Forest threat was not only encapsulated in getting lost there, as madness could also strike in the woods, as is exemplified in an early fifteenth-century case of Johannes. He went mad while hunting for a bear and was completely out of his mind (*alienatus de sensu*). The Dominican author, the compiler of the miracle

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[40] 'Hic homo duobus annis ante preteritis non confessus peccata sua nec accepit corpus Domini, cui ergo dubium, quod diaboli malicia pretenderat suffocato corpore animam eius in inferno sepelire.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 141. Cf. 'Enquête pour la canonisation de saint Yves,' *testis* CIII–CV, pp. 172–3 for Yvo, a youth of eighteen years who became suddenly *furiosus et demens* after swimming in a river. No demons are mentioned.

[41] For Northern examples, see *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 138–9; *Processus seu negocium canonizacionis B. Katerine de Vadstenis*, pp. 86, 87, and 110; *Miracula defixionis domini*, pp. 12 and 74.

[42] 'intravit heremum densissiman…cum ferocissimis bestijs videlicet vrsis, lupis diversique generis serpentibus,' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 138–9. See also 'silvas invias, que ibi maxime sunt.' *Miracula defixionis Domini*, p. 12.

collection *Defixio Domini* in Stockholm,[43] did not offer demons as a reason for Johannes' affliction despite many suitable elements: appropriate symptoms, a location within a dense forest, and the significant role of the bear in many local pre-Christian belief systems.[44] For the compiler, the case was only a sudden attack of illness.

Johannes was a peasant from Uppland, Sweden, where a group of peasants set off to hunt a bear which had been harassing their cattle. This was an all-too-typical situation in the North where bears, wolves, and forest re-growth over fields threatened human habitation and survival. Forest was an ever-present threat but also offered the possibility of occasional refuge from social control.[45] The idea of supernatural elements within forests was well established in traditional Nordic cultures and beliefs: as in many other parts of Europe, forests and water were residences of spirits and gods.[46] For example, the 'Finnish Reformer' Mikael Agricola lamented in the mid-sixteenth century that Finns still embraced pagan habits. He listed the pagan gods they still worshipped; the list included Tapio and Ahti, the gods of forest and water, respectively.[47] The supernatural dimension of forests was particularly emphasized in Orthodox premodern Karelia, an area nowadays covering parts of Eastern Finland and North-Western Russia. It was believed that a forest's supernatural powers, *väki*, could invade the human body, causing

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[43] *Defixio Domini* was a sculpture or a statue of the Deposition of Christ at the Dominican convent in Stockholm. Miracles were collected at the convent between 1408 and 1424. Tryggve Lundén, 'Om defixio Domini eller Heliga Lösen i Stockholm,' in *Miracula defixionis domini*, pp. V–XVIII. There was only one case of demonic possession in this collection. *Miracula defixionis Domini*, p. 16; for cases of *mente capta*, *demencie*, *amencie*, and *furioso*, see pp. 24, 32, 44, 48, 70; for Johannes' case, p. 20. Cases are short without many identifying details.

[44] For pre-Christian traditions in the North, see particularly Catharina Raudvere and Peter Schjødt, eds., *More than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices, and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012). For a comparison between Finno-Ugric and Scandinavian traditions, see Thomas A. DuBois, 'Diet and Deities: Contrastive Livelihoods and Animal Symbolism in Nordic Pre-Christian Religions,' in *More than Mythology*, pp. 65–96; for bears, pp. 86–90. On the cult of the bear in Finnish and Sami folklore, see Matti Sarmela, 'Karhu ihmisen ympäristössä,' in *Kolme on kovaa sanaa. Kirjoituksia kansanperinteestä*, ed. by Pekka Laaksonen and Sirkka-Liisa Mettomäki (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1991), pp. 209–50.

[45] See *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 126 for a robber dwelling in a forest and worshipping the Devil.

[46] In pre-Christian Finno-Ugric tradition borders within nature, natural features such as lakes, rivers, and hills often marked the border of ownership; such places were considered sacred in its dangerous, polluting, sinister meaning; hence, transgressing them could be dangerous and needed to be accomplished with proper rituals. Veikko Anttonen, *Ihmisen ja maan rajat. 'Pyhä' kulttuurisena kategoriana* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1996).

[47] For an analysis of Agricola's list, see Veikko Anttonen, 'Literary Representation of Oral Religion,' in *More than Mythology*, pp. 185–223; for an English translation of Agricola's text, pp. 186–7. Anttonen also discusses potential earlier exemplars for Agricola's text, the Swedish *Själinna Tröst* from the mid-fourteenth century being one of them. See also Raisa Maria Toivo, *Faith and Magic in Early Modern Finland* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) for claims of pre-Christian practices in post-Reformation Finland.

illnesses.[48] Children and animals could get lost there: they could be magically covered by forest so that searchers could not see them, nor could the children escape. The forest-cover, *metsänpeitto*, was hence another magical dimension, which could be broken only by certain rituals.[49] Potentially, then, threats posed by forests could have been easily linked with demons and demonic activity, as in the Italian examples. This kind of causality is not, however, given as an explanation in Nordic hagiography, even if cases of demonic possession, harassment, and presence were many. Malevolent spirits mainly lurked within inhabited areas and the dangers of the wilderness were of natural, not supernatural, origin. In Nordic canonization processes, natural landscapes or entrances thereto did not reflect the idea of liminality or spiritual danger.

The geographical context, climate, and level of urbanization obviously had an immense and concrete effect on what kind of devotional practices people embraced in their daily lives and how they performed them; that is, on the way people lived their religion within their communities. Religion-as-lived was highly imbued with local traditions and culture. Some features may have originated before the Christian era and were later modified to suit new interpretations. In the Mediterranean world there was a long-term tradition of a spiritual threat posed by trees; sleeping in their shadows at noon was considered to be hazardous because of the spirits, whether dryads or nereids. Especially in Greek folklore this idea of ancient origin has persisted into modern times.[50]

Traces of these ideas can plausibly be detected in a miracle performed by Saint Francis of Assisi. Thomas of Celano, one of the first companions of Saint Francis and author of his *vita*, described how Bartholomeus of Narni was paralysed while he was sleeping in the shadow of a tree. It was no ordinary illness, though, but brought upon him by *diabolica correptione*.[51] One meaning of *correptio* is attack or seizure; it was used also when falling suddenly ill. The Devil could cause illnesses by possessing or vexing the victim, but also by disturbing the humoral complexion. Religious and medicinal explanations were complementary in

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[48] These beliefs are reflected in nineteenth-century oral tradition, but are considered to present premodern concepts of the supernatural. See Laura Stark, 'Gender, Sexuality, and the Supranormal: Finnish Oral-Traditional Sources,' in *More than Mythology*, pp. 153–83. On sacrificial trees, see Toivo, *Faith and Magic*, pp. 128–134.

[49] Laura Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises: Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2002), pp. 66–7.

[50] See, for example, John Cuthbert Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1910]), pp. 153–4.

[51] Thomas of Celano, 'Vita prima Sancti Francisci,' p. 107. Thomas of Celano wrote the first vita ('Vita prima sancti Francisci') soon after the death of Francis in 1220, this work probably being connected to his canonization in 1228, and a second version ('Vita secunda S. Francisci') in the 1240s. Later, at the beginning of the 1250s, he compiled a collection of miracles ('Tractatus de miraculis') of Francis.

diagnosing infirmities and seeking a cure.[52] Thomas of Celano did not explain further what he meant by *diabolica correptione* and no typical signs of possession are mentioned in this case. The foot and knee of Bartholomeus of Narni were affected. In *Vita Prima* there is a description of how the foot became sore and withered; the later versions of the case only mention that it was lost (*toto tibia perdidit atque pedem*). In Italian hagiography demonic possession was occasionally manifested only in a physical illness, like paralysis.[53] Nor is the Devil mentioned in all the versions of the case, but the shadow of a tree, whether unspecified or *umbra nucis*, a nut tree, is a persistent feature in various versions of the case.[54]

Another example of the liminality or spiritual threat posed by trees is an unnamed man whose recovery at the shrine of Saint Nicholas in Tolentino was witnessed by Venantius Benitegni. Venantius told how five years earlier, around 1320, he saw how a man from Montefalcone (in the area of Ascoli Piceno) was taken to the shrine tied up on horseback. One day, he had been sleeping in the shadow of a nut tree and was taken or tempted by a demon, hence he could be considered an innocent victim, having become possessed only by being too close to a spirits' dwelling place. The possessed man was not out of his mind, raving, or aggressive, quite the contrary; he lay paralysed and dumb, unable to move his limbs or talk.[55] The case has close similarities with that of Bartholomeus; the place, timing, and symptoms, as well as the inability to use one's limbs, correspond. The shadow, *umbra*, was associated with the Devil and infernal spirits already in the early Middle Ages; trees were a known place of residence of spirits in ancient tradition, and later they, and particularly nut trees, became known as the dwelling

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[52] On demons causing an imbalance of humours, see Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion, c. 1300: The Case of Arnau de Vilanova* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 8, 173–5. On corruption as a cause for mental disorder in hagiography, see Lee Ann Craig, 'The Spirit of Madness: Uncertainty, Diagnosis and the Restoration of Sanity in the Miracles of Henry VI', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 39:1 (2013): 60–93. On demons and medical theories, see Catherine Rider, 'Demons and Mental Disorder in Late Medieval Medicine,' in *Mental (Dis)Order in Later Medieval Europe*, ed. by Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Susanna Niiranen (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 47–69. On the interconnection between spiritual and medicinal remedies, see Lea T. Olsan, 'Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice,' *Social History of Medicine* 16:3 (2003): 343–66 and Catherine Rider, 'Medical Magic and the Church in Thirteenth-Century England,' *Social History of Medicine* 24:1 (2011): 92–107.

[53] 'Le livre des miracles', ed. by Jacques Dalarun, in Jacques Dalarun, *La Sainte et la cité. Micheline de Pesaro († 1356) tertiaire franciscaine* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1992), pp. 175–220, here pp. 214–15. For another example of a paralysed arm as one of the symptoms of demonic possession, see 'Vita sanctae Hedwigis,' ed. by Alexander Semkowich, in *Monumenta poloniae historica* IV, ed. by W. Kertzynski (Lwow: Nakł. Akademii Umiejętności, 1884), pp. 615–16.

[54] Thomas of Celano, 'Vita Prima,' p. 107 and 'Tractatus de miraculis,' in *Legendae S. Francisci Assisiensis*, pp. 271–330, p. 323. See also the anonymous 'Legenda Choralis umbra,' in *Legendae S. Francisci Assisiensis*, pp. 543–54, here p. 550.

[55] Venantius Benitegni is the only witness to the case and he did not know the victim. *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis LXXXVIII, p. 260. 'una die ad dormiendum sub arbore quadam unius nucis extiterat a demone percussus seu tentatus ita et taliter quod ipse testis vidit eundem hominem perdidisse loquelam et cetera membra ita quod brachia altiare nec tangere poterat.'

places of demons. In the early witchcraft trials of the 1420s in Umbria, a walnut tree in Benevento near Naples was revealed to be the central meeting place of Italian witches.[56]

The role of untamed nature and the perils within it was different in these societies: in the North, in Sweden and Finland, dense forests were part of everyday experience. Forests were important in providing a livelihood, but also unpredictable and threatening. Cases reflecting the fears and hardship caused by nature, particularly getting lost in the woods, are numerous in the Northern hagiographic material, but spiritual threats are not associated with these cases. Forests possessed supernatural powers that could be harmful; their liminality as space, in the spiritual sense, is not, however, made tangible in hagiographic material. Indeed, the liminality of wilderness, the dangerousness of border areas in between nature and inhabited areas, is more readily found in the Italian material. The bad-luck theory proposed by Nancy Caciola seems to hold true within the Italian context, but should not be generalized. The spiritual dangers of the wilderness were perceived differently in transalpine Europe: malevolent spirits linked to nature did not possess innocent victims everywhere.

Conclusions

As association with demons was the fate of all unrepentant sinners, the linkage between sin and malign spirits was constant in didactic material. Demonic possession was not, however, an inevitable outcome of sin, nor were all demoniacs possessed for their moral failings. On occasion, personal sins were given as a cause for demonic harassment, but moralists also acknowledged that all Christians, even the pious and devout, were vulnerable to demonic assaults. In the didactic material, the causality between personal sin and possession was connected to other messages, like propagating the powers of a saint, reinforcing hierarchy within an order, or enhancing the clergy's position.

Sin and punishment were not part of possession narrations in lay depositions. Finding someone or something to blame was not a concern and in the majority of the depositions no clear causality was provided. Apparently, it was not a requisite for the witnesses to comprehend the situation. Religion offered a general means to explain what had happened: the misfortune was brought about by the inherent evilness and powers of demons. The unpredictable nature of the phenomenon was accepted by inquisitorial committees as well, since questions relating to the

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[56]   Gerard Bartelink, 'Denominations of the Devil and Demons in the Missale Gothicum,' pp. 193–210, esp. pp. 200–1. Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell*, p. 29. The walnut tree was a small detail in the testimony of the accused witch as the officials' interest lay in the Sabbath; this is one of the earliest recorded cases of its type.

origin of an affliction or personal guilt were not posed. Moral deviance was not considered to be the underlying cause; the sole exception was perhaps doubting or belittling a saint, which could lead to a just punishment carried out by demons. Much more often, however, the angry saint acted out his or her punishment by other means than commanding demons to harass the guilty person.

Regional differences between Northern and Southern cases of possession are clear. The spiritual dangers of both the wilderness and urban spaces are much more emphasized as background reasons in the densely populated urban areas of Northern and Central Italy than in the rural North. Both geographical areas have a long tradition of supernatural forces inhabiting water and forests. These beliefs in arboreal and aquatic spirits were reflected only in Italian cases of possession, corroborating the idea of innocent victims becoming possessed just because of too close association with the dwelling place of spirits. In the rural North, forests were tangibly present in daily life, much more so than for people in the Italian urban communities. This quotidian environmental difference and how people experienced it seems to determine whether forests signified potential spiritual liminality and feature as a cause for possession. In Nordic hagiography, only physical threats lurked in the forests and spiritual dangers were not associated with the wilderness.

In addition to cultural traits, social tensions within the urban sphere also contributed to the way the underlying causality of possession was understood in Italian hagiography. Rapid urban growth and the shortage of resources, such as pure drinking water, caused anxieties that could be revealed and explained by demonic presence. Offering a down-to-earth and concrete causality behind possession, like a demon accidentally swallowed with water from a well, could also make the underlying social relations more comprehensible and unravelling the tensions feasible.

For victims themselves, the accidental nature of possession, an ill-fated foodstuff or beverage, or an unlucky place, may have been a method to exculpate oneself and alleviate the deviance caused by the disturbing symptoms. Proposing such a simple and concrete cause reflects the way religion was entwined with daily life. It may also have been a strategy to cope with the inversion of identity the possession caused—a way to overcome the alterity. Therefore, the main reason for labelling a case as demonic possession may have been the need to explain the otherwise unexplainable.

3

Vulnerable Persons

Corporeality and the Female Life Course

Some spaces, deeds, and gestures were perilous, enabling demons to gain power over their victims. In addition, some people were more prone to demonic assaults than others. Many scholars see demonic possession as a particularly feminine phenomenon.[1] In late medieval miracle narrations, women formed the majority of victims, even if not an exclusive category. General ideas and theories about both women's physiology and morality facilitated their labelling as demoniacs. Demonic possession was a very concrete corporeal phenomenon. The demon literally penetrated the body of his victim and entered through its openings. Women's bodies were more porous, enabling the entrance of foreign entities more easily.[2] At the same time, many normal functions of the female body, such as menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth, were considered impure. As these functions also made the female body more 'open,' their anatomy as well as the demands of the society, above all procreation, rendered women more vulnerable to demons.

The gendered cultural expectations also paved the way for women's preponderance among demoniacs. Women's morality was held to be fragile; in learned theories femininity, sexuality, and sin were closely interrelated. The urge to repudiate earthly pleasures and see sexuality as threatening to the salvation of one's soul was inherited from patristic writings, where renunciation of the flesh and praise of ascetic ideals were prominent. For early Christian authors, carnality was the main cause of sinfulness, as temptation arose from the flesh. And women, in turn, were in dualistic gender models often associated with the flesh, while men were associated with reason.[3] However, medieval gender theories were varied and inconsistent, and gender was seen as a multifaceted, not binary, system. Furthermore, medieval approaches to the body were neither simple nor straightforward: dualism between

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[1] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 40 and Sarah Ferber, 'Possession and the Sexes,' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Alison Rowlands (Houndmills: Palgrave McMillan, 2009), pp. 214–38. Cf. Chave-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, pp. 253–4, who argues for the feminization of the phenomenon from the twelfth century on.

[2] Elliott, 'The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality,' pp. 141–73, and Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 37–45. See also Caciola, 'Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe,' pp. 289–90.

[3] On Jerome's and Origen's comments, see Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis*, p. 23. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 174, 188, and 376.

mind and body has been reassessed, as bodies were also ample vessels for the practice of penitence, abstinence, and asceticism. The body enabled encounters with both God and the Devil; the body itself could be a means to both salvation and damnation. Furthermore, the body was the site where religion was experienced and the body affected the way religion was felt and practised, making gender, corporeality, and sexuality crucial in explaining demonic presence.[4]

The intention here is not to identify a single universal discourse of the Church linking the feminine and the diabolical. Gender is seen as a process, changing as the individual matures and her or his social position changes. Therefore, this chapter's structure follows the female life course focusing on corporeality's links with demonic presence. Menstruation, (the loss of) virginity, marriage, pregnancy, and giving birth were closely linked with religiously imbued changes in social position which caused anxiety. As regards female corporeality and the demonic, the clerical and lay perspectives held nuanced differences. This chapter argues that on occasion general cultural unease about corporeality, and female sexuality in particular, was reflected in depositions: personal and social anxieties concerning the signposts of physical growth and social maturing were turned into the language of the demonic and resolved by resort to supernatural aid. The paucity of cases implies, however, that the link between female corporeality and sexuality and the demonic was not inevitably made in the minds of laity testifying in canonization processes; demons were not regularly needed in these processes. Instead, their role was to give voice to fears and uncertainties when something went wrong in these precarious situations.

Diabolical Virgins

Demonic possession was not an age-related phenomenon by its very nature; infants in the cradle, youths, and young maidens as well as mature adults of both

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[4] The interconnection between gender, body, and religious practices has attracted keen interest among medievalists during the last decades and the scholarship in this field is far too extensive to be cited here in full. Especially in literary criticism, one could speak about a 'corporeal turn.' The studies of Caroline Walker Bynum have been seminal in the analysis of gendered aspects of bodily practices and the body as a positive element in medieval religiosity. See, for example, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); *Fragmentation and Redemption*; and *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). See also her *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in the Late Medieval West* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), pp. 31–3 for a caveat against taking the body as a synonym for a person or individual. See Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 23–37 for a critique of the idea that patristic and medieval authors had a dualistic model of the body as a psychosomatic unity and potential site for redemption, and of the flesh as the sinful body encompassing carnal desires. See also Joanna de Groot and Sue Morgan, 'Introduction: Beyond the "Religious Turn"? Past, Present and Future Perspectives in Gender History,' in *Sex, Gender and the Sacred: Reconfiguring Religion in Gender History*, ed. by Joanna de Groot and Sue Morgan (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), pp. 1–29.

sexes could fall victim to malign spirits. The exact ages of the victims are not regularly given in the depositions in canonization processes, but it seems that very old people are not commonly found among the possessed. It was claimed that some victims had suffered from demonic possession for years, even for decades, and some of them had, apparently, (nearly) adult children; so they were at least mature adults by the time of the case being registered. However, maidens and young wives seem to have fallen prey to demons more often. The age distribution likely reflects the general imagery of older women being not victims of demons but rather their servants or allies.[5]

Physical maturing may have played a role in the interpretation of symptoms. According to Moshe Sluhovsky, most of the possessed laywomen in early modern France were at about the age when they menstruated for the first time, got married, and/or lost their virginity, which were all major changes in their lives. He states that demonic possession was a way to project sexual anxieties in a culture where sexuality was linked with impurity and where it was otherwise hard, if not impossible, to give voice to such anxieties. '[P]ossessed women […] highlighted the Christian mistrust of the body in general and of the female body in particular.'[6] Thus, physical maturing linked with religiously imbued changes in social position and especially their connection to sexuality seems to have been the major cause of possession in that context.

Sexual and physical changes appear as an implicit causality in canonization processes, too. For example, the thirteenth-century case of Ponce seems to link bodily changes and religious transgression to mental disorder and potential demonic assault. The affliction and delivery of Ponce is recorded in the compilation of William of Saint-Pathus, which is based on the now lost canonization proceedings of Louis IX held at St Denis in 1282–3.[7] Ponce was a girl of ten years, thus prepubescent and not yet of marriageable age. According to canon law, twelve was the age of consent for marriage for girls and many medical treatises gave

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[5]   Susan K. Silver ('Demonic Possession and Poetic Exorcism in Early Modern France,' *Neophilologus* 89 (2005): 23–39) argues that in general in early modern imagery younger women were deemed to be easy prey for demons, while older women were their servants, i.e. witches. Demoniacs' young bodies were the Devil's hiding place and victims, while older women were the Devil's collaborators as witches and their physically repugnant bodies were the very manifestation of Satan's power.

[6]   Moshe Sluhovsky, 'A Divine Apparition or Demonic Possession? Female Agency and Church Authority in Demonic Possession in Sixteenth-Century France,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 27:4 (1996): 1039–55, esp. pp. 1051–2.

[7]   William of Saint-Pathus was a Franciscan friar and closely connected to the royal family, as he was the confessor of Louis' widow and their daughter. Roughly twenty years after the hearing he compiled his work *Vie et miracles de Saint Louis* which was based on the documents of the canonization inquiry. He probably wrote in Latin, but the only surviving version is a later French translation. M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, *Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 37–9.

twelve as the age of menarche.[8] However, a changing body and nascent sexuality may have been the cause of the problems and ensuing tumult.[9]

The episode began between Easter and Pentecost. Ponce was possessed or went mad while playing outside with other girls and finding a rag covered with blood. Her friends advised her to throw it away, but she insisted that it was the blood of Jesus, and, despite being forbidden to do so by her mother, she took the rag to the local church and left it at the cemetery. The same day she went out of her mind, speaking foolish words that were not worth listening to. She claimed that she was not the daughter of her mother and father, but was of royal lineage. Not only did she deride her own domestic background in words, but she also tore her clothes and damaged things in the house of her family. In the church, Ponce wanted to sit with the priests and sing. She claimed authority within the church and broke the bounds of proper behaviour in other ways as well: she extinguished candles and threw them to the ground. For her restlessness, she was tied up.[10]

Her father visited saints and shrines for a cure but in vain. Finally, three years later, Ponce was cured at the shrine of Saint Louis in the church of St Denis. However, her behaviour and social position remained somewhat unusual. After her torment, as a girl of thirteen years, she was so pious that she did not eat meat on Wednesdays and fasted on Fridays, while on Saturdays she ate only bread and water; in addition, she frequented the church and masses and did not want to hear anything about getting married.

Sharon Farmer, in her study analysing the lived experiences of the poor in medieval France, sees this case as an example of a mental crisis hitting a girl coming of age but refusing to accept her future role as a wife. In her view, the case represents clerical views on the sexuality of lower-class women, and she sees the rag as a symbol of sexuality and oncoming menarche. In Farmer's analysis, the case represents the lived reality as well as clerical views, while Sylvia Huot, in her investigation of madness in medieval French literature, takes a different approach: she reads the case of Ponce as a literary construction and sees Ponce as a constructed protagonist used by the compiler of the miracle collection to serve other ends and messages. According to her, William of Saint-Pathus was using the figure of Ponce to construct a portrait of madness as a confusion of identity, a failure to

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[8] Kim Philips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270–1540* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 25–8; Kathryn Ann Taglia, 'Marriage's Original Purpose and First Good: Placing Children within the Medieval Church's Views on Marriage', in *Essays on Medieval Childhood. Responses to Recent Debates*, ed. by Joel T. Rosenthal (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), pp. 151–73, here pp. 155–8.

[9] For these kinds of interpretations of the case, see Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 132–3 and Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 23–6. Cf. Lett, *L'enfant des miracles*, pp. 240–1.

[10] *Les Miracles de Saint Louis*, pp. 94–6.

respect the categories of difference. Sylvia Huot argues that Ponce 'rejects the basis of her socially constructed identity,' and she reads the case in a religious context as an obsession with the Eucharist.

As noted, this case is not based on direct testimonies, even though William of Saint-Pathus used the now lost canonization records as the basis for his compilation. Arguably, he was quite faithful to his original source when compiling the miracle section and may have transcribed large portions verbatim. The various depositions were, however, conflated so that each miracle forms a single, distinct narration.[11] The case of Ponce was apparently mainly based on the father's deposition, so it is his point of view that comes forth. Ponce is not labelled a demoniac as such, her condition being referred to as an illness (*maladie*), nor is there any mention of possessing spirits, even though her father mentions delivery from and future protection against evil (or harm), *Die le defendist de mal*. Puberty and nascent sexuality may have been behind the case, as the later refusal to marry suggests; her actions may have been prompted by sexual anxieties and fears of impurity as well as the future responsibilities of a mother and wife. However, Ponce does not fit unproblematically into the pattern described by Sluhovsky; she was younger than the usual age of menarche and her rebellion was not directed solely against future sexual responsibilities.

In the end we are left with a bloody rag in our hands. Did it symbolize impending menarche and inherent impurity, or rather Eucharistic fervour, as Ponce's later religious enthusiasm may suggest? Be that as it may, an equal part of the narration consisted of the social consequences: her derision of her family and lineage and the material losses due to her destructive behaviour. Indeed, Ponce's behaviour can also be analysed in the context of family relations and the socialization processes of a child. The problems started when Ponce did not obey maternal authority, but carried the rag to the church contrary to her mother's command. Even though Ponce claimed that she was protesting against her social position on a more general level, the actual deeds were done against her own family.

In cases of child demoniacs, symptoms of possession could reflect problems in the socialization process. When something went wrong within family relations, demons could have been a convenient or occasionally the only possible explanation for the symptoms. On these occasions the values of the surrounding society and cultural norms, like respecting one's parents and social status, were not fully internalized.[12] Labelling a case as demonic possession offered a way to single out a guilty party without putting the blame, or at least not all of it, on the victim.

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[11] Gaposchkin, *Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade*, p. 39 and Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, pp. 7–9.

[12] On socialization theories, see, for example, Gerald Handel, *Childhood Socialization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2006); Allison James and Adrian James, *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Allison James, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001). On childhood socialization in the Middle Ages and demonic possession as a signal of problems in this process, see Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Socialization Gone Astray?,' pp. 95–112, and Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Diabolical Rage? Children, Violence, and Demonic Possession in the Late Middle Ages,' *Journal of Family History* 41:3 (2016): 236–54.

Demons could have been a scapegoat for deviant behaviour. Demonic possession was an inversion of identity and the victims were not truly themselves; an outside force was responsible for their behaviour. Blaming a supernatural force for the incident was no less stigmatizing, but it could have been exculpating. Demoniacs were typically seen as innocent victims: they could not control their deeds or speech and were not responsible for the things the invading spirit made them do. A similar logic can be found in the legal context as well, where blaming the Devil may have been a method of exoneration, not a reflection of superstition or incoherence in the legal system.[13]

Obviously, internalizing society's norms and values was not unproblematic or straightforward; there were inconsistencies and contradictions in medieval culture, particularly when it came to women's reproductive powers. The physical changes and signs, like menstruation, may have been considered impure, but they were constituents of fertility. Procreation, in turn, was crucial for family and community survival. More than failure in the socialization process, Ponce's case seems to reflect its (unintentional) success within her family, as her actions seem to have been brought about by her father's acts and wishes. At the end of the narration Guiarz, the father, explained how he had suffered badly from avarice (*couvoitise*). He had always wanted to be something else; he felt that his social position was not good enough, his house was small, and he had always wanted to be rich. While at the tomb of Saint Louis, he prayed that the saint would free him from such desires. Guiarz, too, was liberated at the shrine, just like Ponce. Thus, even though Ponce's actions created a serious problem within the household and they did not fit within the accustomed modes of behaviour, rather than simply rebelling against her family, she may have actually internalized the wishes and values of her father and found a personal and gender-specific way to express similar wishes. This was not just a matter of the physical changes bringing womanhood and sexual anxieties; the maturing process as a whole was involved; that is, the requirements of adult life within one's social and economic status.

However, women's and even young girls' deviant behaviour may have been more readily linked with sexual motivations, even if the link was not automatic. Guillelmina, whom we encounter in the canonization process of Saint Louis of Toulouse in 1308, was also a young girl of nine or ten years, yet indecency played a role in her condition and it was apparently one of the reasons why she was considered to be a demoniac. She said dishonest and filthy words which she was not accustomed to use; she exposed her body, tore her face and clothes with her nails,

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[13] Sara M. Butler, 'Representing the Middle Ages: The Insanity Defence in Medieval England,' in *The Treatment of Disabled Persons in Medieval Europe: Examining Disability in the Historical, Legal, Literary, Medical, and Religious Discourses of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Wendy J. Turner and Tory Vandeventer Pearman (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), pp. 117–33, here pp. 123–4, for mentions of the Devil in suicide cases in English court records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See also Claude Gauvard, *De grace especial: Crime, État et société en France à la fin du Moyen Âge*, 2 vols. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991), p. 441.

and needed to be tied down so as not to harm herself or others. She put earth and other filthy things in her mouth. Guillelmina was clearly out of her mind, but it remains unknown if the dishonest and filthy words included blaspheming God or saints.[14] According to the depositions, which were recorded some ten years after the incident, Guillelmina took off her clothes and exposed herself. She was a child of nine years and thus not yet a maiden to be seen in sexual terms. Nevertheless, her self-exposure was described as imprudent by her mother and Guillelmus de Grassa, another witness to the case. Even if the case was not labelled as demonic possession in the records, the witnesses were not so certain. Her father stated that she became mad or possessed (*amens seu demoniata*), and the same twofold categorization was also used in other depositions: Guillelmus de Grassa explained that he saw the girl as mad or enraged (*rabiatam sive furiosam*), but people thought that she was mad or possessed (*credebant gentes quod esset amens seu demoniata*). Guillelmina herself repeats this uncertainty in her deposition, as well.[15]

The tearing of one's clothes was a typical symptom for demoniacs, for both men and women alike. However, it does not seem to have had moral undertones if the victim was a man. In Guillelmina's case, indecent exposure seems to have been important even if she also manifested other symptoms; three out of the five witnesses mention this detail although she was only a child. Only Guillelmina's father and Guillelmina herself leave it out of their narrations. This may have been done out of shame, but Guillelmina also claims that, because of her young age, she did not remember the affliction. Nakedness, even of a young girl, was such a strong violation of social norms that it was well remembered even some ten years later at the time of the interrogation. In medieval culture, the bounds of proper conduct were stricter for women and even for young girls than for males and, therefore, transgressing them may have been seen as more severe. Parents may have been less tolerant of aggressive behaviour in their daughters than in their sons. The youthful rebelliousness of boys was often thought of and seen as leading to external violence and social disorder, but docility was an important part of idealized femininity.[16] Thus, aggression and violence were bigger norm violations for girls

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[14] 'aliena verba et turpia et inhonesta.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLV, 214; 'dicebat verba turpia et inhonesta,' cap. CLIX, p. 216. There are five witnesses to the case: Guillelmina herself, her father, her mother, and two neighbours, cap. CLV–CLIX, pp. 214–16. This miracle took place soon after the death of Saint Louis in 1297, which is noteworthy since Louis did not have close connections to the Marseilles area before he was buried there and he was not seen as a thaumaturge immediately after his death even if miracles at the tomb soon began. For the political context of the cult, see Vauchez, *La Sainteté en occident*, pp. 265–72.

[15] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLIX, p. 216. This shared hesitation was repeated in the shortened version of the hearing as well: 'quod posessa a demone credebatur,' Vatican City, BAV MS Ottobonianus latinus 2516 F 39-43 vita et miracula s Ludovici ep TolosaniOttob. Lat. 2516, f. 42r.

[16] Ruth Mazo Karras argues violence was a fundamental measure of man: chivalric honour was defended by violence and it was an element of knightly training; university students and young craft workers were also repeatedly in conflict with their environment because of their violent actions. Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), esp. pp. 21, 77, and 128. For statistics of youth misbehaviour

than for boys and so posed a bigger threat to the social order. Violence and aggression as well as exposal and nakedness, as in the case of Guillelmina, broke many cultural and social values ascribed to femininity, and even expectations of physical appearance and the essential nature of young girls.

The narration of Ponce's tribulation was, at least to some extent, the creation of William of Saint-Pathus, while Guillelmina's case is based on depositions given by the participants. They both share, however, the idea that the affliction was a liminal, curable state. The reason for it was not the inherently evil character of these girls or general female moral fragility. Rather, both of them were described as fulfilling society's expectations of their social roles and behaviour before the affliction. For example, Guillelmus de Grassa argued that before the infirmity (*infirmitas*) Guillelmina was always of good temper, rational, and peaceful, as was appropriate for her age.[17] Ponce, for her part, was described as having been sane and healthy, discreet, and sensible.[18] These descriptions reveal that the bounds of proper conduct were most likely rather strict for young girls, even though, admittedly, biting, eating mud, and throwing candles to the ground in a church, symptoms described for these girls, would have been major transgressions for any member of society. However, these details simultaneously testify that young girls were not regularly an anxiety point for their communities: girls of that age, that is around ten years old, were expected to be even-tempered, discreet, and placid. When this was so, they seem to have been a source of comfort, potentially even of joy, for their communities.

Nascent sexuality, menarche, and other signs of puberty caused anxiety and afflictions that were on occasion interpreted as demonic possession. This was not, however, a major explanatory category. The paucity of cases implies that the link between female corporeality, sexuality, and the demonic was not inevitable in the minds of laity testifying in canonization processes; demons were not normally needed to voice anxieties or to explain problems in this field.

Growing up was not only a physical phenomenon, like menarche, but it was linked with certain social changes, too. Marriage was for girls the most important passage to adulthood. Consent and also consummation were constituents of a marriage. Paying the marital debt was an essential element of married life, and bringing offspring into the world was considered the major future responsibility of a bride. Therefore, anxieties over sexuality, social changes, and future responsibilities were present on entering into wedlock. In hagiographic material, apparent

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and crime in medieval societies, Deborah Youngs, *The Life-Cycle in Western Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 103–6. Cf. Philips, *Medieval Maidens* for idealized femininity.

[17] 'dixit quod antequam sibi contigeret illa infirmitas, ipsa filia erat et fuerat semper disposita et alias bene sensata et pacifica secundum etatem suam.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLIX, p. 216.

[18] 'Et fu puis touzjours saine et hetiee et discrete en paroles et en fez et ordeneresse de soi et en bon estat.' *Les Miracles de Saint Louis*, p. 96.

sexual anxieties among brides or brides-to-be leading to demonic possession can occasionally be found; those afflicted during or before weddings are always the brides, as demons do not seem to have preyed on grooms on such occasions.

Wedding Troubles: The Bride That Hopped Over the Table and Disappeared

For the medieval laity, marriage was a passage in life; it was a prerequisite for adult life for men and women alike. For women, marriage changed not only their social but also their moral status. The clerical authorities were eager to stress the importance of marital status in both the moral and social context: paying the marital debt bound wives to sexuality and rendered them morally inferior to virgins and widows. Furthermore, in the records kept by the clerics, women were typically categorized by their marital status and by the men of their family: unmarried women were identified as their father's daughters and married matrons as their husband's wives. This classification was a political act with value-laden choices emphasizing the dependent role of women.[19] Marriage had, however, an effect on masculine identity as well, since it brought men both wealth and responsibility simultaneously. The husband was the head of the household and he usually had the privilege of and responsibility for taking care of his wife's property. Thus being married and having a family of one's own, a wife and children who were dependent on the head of the household, was an important signifier of the esteem attached to adult manhood. 'Husbandry', being a husband and a manager of a household, was an essential element of masculine identity.[20]

Marriage was an important social bond but in the medieval world it was also a sacrament, a God-ordained holy procedure. It affected the future husband and wife as well as their families for the rest of their lives. Medieval culture put a high value on marriage and sexuality; illicit sexual activities, such as adultery and fornication, were liable to sanctions in both secular and canon law. Sexuality was a delicate matter: many activities were seen as moral transgressions, and women's sexuality was very often seen as a threat, both to their own salvation, but also and more

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[19] Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, p. 40. Because of this categorization, 'single woman' was a very complex category in medieval sources. Often, unmarried women practising an independent business were, for example, in the tax sources classified under a male head of household. Cordelia Beattie, *Medieval Single Women: The Politics of Social Classification in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[20] On marriage and masculine identity, see Susan Mosher Stuard, 'Burdens of Matrimony: Husbanding and Gender in Medieval Italy', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 61–71; Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 57–71. Cf. Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), on 'manhood' as an 'estate': a positive category of status and form of privilege. It was based on age, being an adult in between youth and old age, and on householding and social status, i.e. being a married head of household with respectable social status and behavioural characteristics.

importantly to others as well. The female body was linked with uncontrollability, and unorganized sexuality was a seed of social unrest, even chaos.

Liminality, a space in between, was also an integral feature of wedding and marriage rituals: social and religious status was soon to change and, for those marrying for the first time, childhood or youth was left behind. Liminality was a prerequisite for someone to leave their former status and acquire a new one. The wedding feast marked these changes and it was a time of waiting before the consummation of the marriage. However, liminal spaces, places, and positions, when one was not yet either here or there, could turn out to be dangerous. These perils and anxieties were occasionally interpreted as being caused by malign spirits, and demons were considered to be a threat to the sexual life and prosperity of the couple. This threat was of major concern to the medieval clergy and laity and was discussed in several treatises. The theme is present in the Bible: a cautionary example of demonic menace was the wedding of Sarah and Tobias in the book of Tobit, which was included in the Vulgate. A demon in love with Sarah had killed seven of her grooms before the wedding night and consummation of the marriage. Tobias was counselled by an angel not to consummate the marriage during the first night, but to pray with his bride for three nights. The demon was expelled by burning a fish heart and liver at the bridal chamber's door (Tobit 7:1–13; 8:2–3).[21]

The book of Tobit is not, however, the only medieval evidence of the liminal nature of the wedding and its interconnection with malevolent forces. In the fourteenth century the *Benedictio thalami* (prayer over a bedchamber) was in growing use. Its purpose was to drive away evil from the bridal chamber.[22] *Maleficium*, harmful magic, was often considered to be behind malfunctions such as impotence or barrenness, reflecting the importance of fertility for both lay society and elite theories.[23] The story of the wedding night of Sarah and Tobias may manifest the general fears relating to the consummation of marriage and to changes in the course of life. It may also tell about the anxiety felt by grooms, since they were the ones harassed and eventually killed by the demon, a jealous former lover. However, the evidence of canonization processes suggests that a considerable amount of tension was felt by the brides, or at least they could reveal this tension in ways

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[21] The number seven can be seen as denoting completeness. Sarah was completely under the influence of a demon and unable to act. Yet, in the end she had seven sons with Tobias: they were perfectly fruitful. The sevenfold misfortune was overcome by the sevenfold happiness. The book of Tobit is one of the Apocrypha, a collection of books rejected from their canon by the Jews but accepted by some of the Christian patristic authors. Ever since the fourth century CE, commentaries have been written on Tobit; the manuscript tradition is complex and the Vulgate, Hebrew, and Greek versions differ from each other to a remarkable extent. Stuart Weeks, Simon Gathercole, and Loren Stuckenbruck, eds., *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004); Benedikt Otzen, *Tobit and Judith* (London: The Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), pp. 60–6.

[22] Geoffrey David Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), pp. 38, 50, 140.

[23] Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 241–322. The idea that impotence could be caused by *maleficium* was not new; it was known in antiquity and dealt with in medieval treatises on canon law, theology, and medicine. The shift in focus took place from 1400 on, when witches were often blamed for it. See Catherine Rider, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

which pointed to demonic presence, which then could be ameliorated by means of a miracle. For example, in Sweden at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Gunvor, the newly wed wife of Gunnarus, went mad at her wedding feast. The bride was talking with other people during the meal, and sitting peacefully at the table, when all of a sudden she got up, rushed out of the house, and ran in the meadows and forest like a wild animal. The father and the groom had to fetch her and bring her back with her hands tied. Demonic influence is not mentioned; the girl was defined as raving mad, *furiosa*, and mentally incapable (*laboravit in amentia*).[24]

In medieval Europe, weddings were important social occasions manifesting the wealth of the families of the newly wed. Medieval Sweden was no exception; an abundance of food and drink was an essential element in such festivities. Sumptuary legislation tried to restrict luxurious elements, such as the length of the festivities, number of guests, and food offered.[25] Not much is known of this particular feast; Gunnarus, the groom, is described as *providus vir*, potentially implying wealth, but the groom and bride were nevertheless described as tenants (*coloni*) of a dean.[26] For an unknown reason, the feast took place in the house of Turgillus, the dean of the chapter of Skara cathedral. It is not explained why he hosted the wedding feast, but the setting implies a close connection between the landlord and his tenants. In all likelihood, in the local context, this was a significant occasion, hence the bigger the scandal.

The incident took place apparently on the first day of the wedding banquet, as the groom explained that the incident took place before the intercourse that followed (*ante carnalem inter eos copulam subsecutam*). Consummation was a crucial element of valid marriage; it was a requirement of canon law and considered essential by the laity. In medieval Sweden, bedding, the ritual of leading the bride to the bed and the couple being publicly bedded together after the wedding banquet, was a legal constituent of a valid marriage.[27] The detail of the timing of the intercourse may have been the groom's way to exculpate himself: there was nothing illicit going on. Furthermore, at this point the marriage was not yet valid and the behaviour of Gunvor was not his responsibility. Unfortunately, the records of the case, the canonization process of Brynolf of Skara from 1417, are brief, and the only witnesses were Gunnarus, the groom, and Turgillus, the dean. Therefore, it is impossible to analyse further the reasons for the affliction. It is certain, though,

[24] 'Vita s. Brynolphi Episc. Scarensis cum processu eius canonizationis,' pp. 143, 168–9.

[25] See Mia Korpiola, *Between Betrothal and Bedding: Marriage Formation in Sweden 1200–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 53–60.

[26] In medieval Sweden, tenant and freehold farms did not differ in size to any great extent. Almost half of the land was owned by freeholding farmers. Janken Myrdal, 'Farming and Feudalism 1000–1700,' in *Agrarian History of Sweden: From 4000 BC to AD 2000*, ed. by Janken Myrdal and Mats Morell (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011), pp. 72–117.

[27] Consummation was not mentioned in the Swedish matrimonial laws, while bedding (which only implies consummation) was. Korpiola, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, pp. 60–5.

that Gunvor's acts were transgressive; the issue was not only one of proper conduct but even of human identity; she was described as roaming around the fields and forests almost like an untamed animal (*quasi indomita bestia*). Gunvor was cured at the shrine of Brynolf, former Bishop of Skara; she was taken there weak and mad but she returned sane and unscathed. A liminal social state may have made her more vulnerable, but not all frenzies were of demonic origin.

There is another temporally and geographically close case revealing wedding anxiety: Cristina was possessed already in her childhood but became fiercely possessed just after her wedding. For her childhood tribulations, her parents received some of the blame; their resort to healers using magical arts (*incantator/incantatrix*) made her condition worse. In contrast to the case of Gunvor, the tribulations of Cristina form a lengthy narration in Birgitta's dossier. Since the descriptions of demonic assaults are so vivid and detailed, with demons harassing her in the forms of a horse, wolf, dog, snake, and an envious twelve-year-old boy, it is likely they are based on her own memories.[28] As to the later events, personal experiences or Cristina's descriptions are not as evident. The local clergy gave testimony covering the whole course of events recorded in Birgitta's canonization dossier, but neither Cristina's testimony nor that of her husband were recorded.[29]

According to the narration, in the third day after the wedding Cristina fell to the ground, became stiff, and pressed her legs together so tightly that no one could open them. The reason for her affliction was not given, but the timing just after the wedding as well as the pressing of the legs together imply that the reasons were linked with sexuality and manifested her fear of future responsibilities. The timing could have been a deliberate rhetorical choice: the practice of the three chaste nights spent in prayer before consummating the marriage was known also in medieval Sweden and was presented as a model for pious couples.[30] The clerical construction of the event may imply that three chaste night had passed and it was time to engage in a carnal relationship and consummate the marriage, or that this practice was not followed and therefore the demon gained power over the newly wed wife.[31] The husband was, however, described as legitimate (*maritus*

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[28] See Anders Fröjmark, 'Demons in Miracula,' in *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Tore Nyberg*, ed. by Lars Bisgaard et al. (Odense: Odense University Press, 2001), pp. 275–84.

[29] The case was registered in the local hearing conducted by the Vadstena clergy and attached to the letter of the Bishop of Linköping. *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 120–3, 175–6.

[30] These aspects were treated in an anonymous Birgittine manuscript from Vadstena, entitled *De septem sacramentis*. However, it was likely written around 1400, thus after the recording of this incident. Carl-Gustaf Andrén, ed., *De septem sacramentis: En sakramentsutläggning från Vadstena kloster ca 1400* (Lund: Gleerups, 1963).

[31] The recording in a local hearing is also full of didactic formulations, for example *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 121: 'o insensata peccatorum obstinata duricia, ut a malis resipiscas intelligere, quanta malicia puniat animam, in quam secundum scelerum suorum enormitatem plene preualet, cum tanto furore affligit corpus in cuius anima dominium forte non possidet.' For other cases including number symbolism, see the case of the infant Cristina in Chapter 2, where the innocent virgin daughter suffered for seven weeks twice for the negligence of her parents. Bishop Nils

legittimus). This may have been a reference to the consummation of the marriage but it may also have been a way to emphasize his acceptable status; nothing illicit was going on in the marriage, contrary to the previous choices of Cristina's parents.

Cristina's symptoms got worse; she was unable to move by herself and she nearly lost her sight; she could only see the Devil and a small circle around him. Eventually, after a laborious pilgrimage and the demon's forceful resistance, she was taken to the shrine of Birgitta, where she was cured. Leigh Ann Craig sees Cristina's case as a performance with her self-representation showing remarkable agency, and all the participants played identity roles which helped the demoniac to play her role. The tightly pressed-together knees signified opposition to her husband and her marriage: she was not a potential sexual partner because of her inability to part her legs.[32] Clearly, nor was she an efficient manager of household duties in the way that was expected of wives.

The 'role playing' of demoniacs accords with the recent findings of Brian Levack, who strongly argues that all demoniacs followed scripts that were encoded in their religious cultures.[33] Since the recorded narration is a clerical interpretation of Cristina's situation and symptoms, it is their construction of the performance of a demoniac that emerges from the source material, not Cristina's self-representation or experiences. Neither is the evaluation of the congregation available to us since only local clergy testified; the lay participants were not interrogated. In addition to the nature of the performance, its inner logic may also have been the reverse of what Craig has suggested: the inability to pay the marital debt was a major transgression for a newly wed wife in the eyes of both the laity and clergy, a transgression that called for an explanation, and demonic presence offered one. Therefore, Cristina did not press her legs together and refuse to pay the marital debt because she was a demoniac, but as she was unable to fulfil the expected social roles, demonic possession offered a means to explain her incomprehensible behaviour and the unbearable situation.

Licit sexuality was monogamous and expressed within wedlock for procreative purposes, yet it could still cause anxieties, as the previous cases demonstrate. The emotional stress was much more intense in cases of illicit and especially forced sex. This is manifest in a case recorded in the canonization process of Charles of Blois, where an allegedly raped woman labelled as a demoniac was cured at his shrine in Guingamp. She had, after aimless wandering, arrived at the shrine and was cured. Not much was known of her tribulations; according to the sole witness, frater Paganus, she was raped by powerful men and afterwards, because of the assault

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Hermansson also claimed that this other Cristina was cured on the seventh day at the shrine, *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 176–7.

[32] Leigh Ann Craig, *Wandering Women and Holy Matrons: Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 203–18.
[33] Levack, *The Devil Within.*

and the fear that her husband would hate her for it, she lost her mind and became *demens ac demoniata*.[34] Forced sex acts are not regularly found in canonization processes, but violence and protection miracles are quite numerous in this process, which was carried out in Angers in 1371. This area was ravaged by the Hundred Years' War and violence was endemic: in many miracles Charles protects his supporters and punishes political adversaries.[35] The case of the unnamed women is, however, the only one explained by demons. Her symptoms, namely the aimless wandering, further underlined the presence of malign spirits since such behaviour was a disruption of proper order and especially night-time wandering was potentially threatening for it could be seen as an inversion of Christian values.[36] In modern terminology this woman's condition would likely be defined as post-traumatic stress disorder. Medieval people were not, obviously, familiar with such terms, but it was understood that violence and forced sex caused severe anxiety; thus the physical violence and sexual shame made her vulnerable to demonic assaults, too. To turn this experience into the language of the demonic, that is, to explain the symptoms by demonic presence, was a means for a victim to voice her distress and the community to comprehend and help to ameliorate them.[37]

Sexuality and procreative responsibilities were not the only elements to cause worry for brides-to-be. These duties were generally quite similar in different parts of Europe, but the local context may have added an extra layer to the anxiety. The marriage market in later medieval and early modern Italy has been described as particularly frantic and characterized by dowry inflation. Scholars have different interpretations of the phenomenon. One line of argument claims that it inevitably weakened the position of women, since marriage was treated as an exchange between men of different lineages. For economic reasons, it was impossible for

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[34] 'quod ipsa existens coniugata rapta fuerat per aliquos de magna sotietate. Super quo in tantum turbata fuit et etiam metu ne maritus suus propter haec ipsam odio iieret quod ipsa demens et demoniata fuit effecta.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, f. 124r. See also Levack, *The Devil Within*, p. 178 for a similar case of a servant girl becoming possessed after being raped and Elliott, *Proving Woman*, p. 251 for a victim of incestuous rape. For a pregnant woman with *vagationis errore*, see the miracle collection of Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin. Paris, Bibliothéque Sainte-Geneviève MS 1367, ff. 131r–131v. See also *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, ed. by Joseph M. H. Albanès and Ulysse Chevalier (Paris and Marseilles: Picard & Ruat, 1897), 67, p. 468.

[35] Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War, c.1300–c.1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; rev. edn 2001), pp. 12–26; Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years War* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 5–27. On the political and administrative history of Brittany, see Patrick Galliou and Michael Jones, *The Bretons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), esp. pp. 217–47. On protection miracles, see BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, ff. 102v, 103r, 103v, 106r–v, 124r–v; on punishing political adversaries or people doubting his sanctity, see ff. 127v–128r.

[36] Boureau, *Satan hérétique*, p. 183.

[37] See also Sarah Ferber, 'The Abuse of History? Identity Politics, Disordered Identity and the "Really Real" in French Cases of Demonic Possession,' in *Women, Identities and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Stephanie Tarbin and Susan Broomhall (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 29–41 for possibilities and challenges in retrospective diagnosis; dissociative symptoms could have been provoked by sexual abuse and trauma and later turned into the language of the demonic.

families to marry off all of their daughters and many ended up in a convent against their will. The other strand of reasoning points out that more expensive dowries increased the wealth of women, since the dowries became their personal property after the death of their husbands. The ones to suffer negative economic consequences were not only daughters but sons as well; families were required to pay huge dowries for their daughters and be prepared to pay back the dowries of their daughters-in-law in the event of the death of a married son. Therefore, sons may also have been unable to marry because of the economic obligations of their natal families.[38]

These fears are sometimes reflected in the canonization processes as well. Deformity or illness as a reason to abandon marriage plans was not unknown, and such fears can be found even for young girls in order to explain the desperate situation before the cure. On some occasions, it was feared that the onset of a new disease would jeopardize ongoing marriage negotiations.[39] Demonic possession was, obviously, one degree worse: an ugly but healthy wife may not have been the most desirable choice in the marriage market, but a demon inside a family member put the whole household at risk. A potential example of nuptial anxiety and family fears was recorded in Rome in the middle of the fifteenth century in the canonization process of Saint Frances:[40] Stephanotia, *virgo nuptilis*, betrothed to a

[38] Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *La maison et le nom: Stratégies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance* (Paris: Editions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1990), pp. 185–213 and 249–61; Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994). For a contrasting view, see Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 198–9, for the historiography of the field, pp. 1–24 and Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe, eds., *Marriage in Italy 1300–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1–21. Girls with mental or physical disabilities could not be and were not just dumped in a convent, though. Entrance required a dowry as well, but for sick or disabled novices an additional stipend was needed to cover their extra needs in addition to a dowry. Sharon T. Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 95.

[39] 'Quod medici volunt incidere in guttore filiam meam Ceccham: remanebit ibi cicatrix ita quod erit vituperata.' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis XVI, p. 126; '…filia sua […] supervenit ei gangule et inflatio magna bene. […] Et finaliter cum eam maritasset, crevit grossities sicut unum ovum. Unde ipsa, multum plorans <et> dolens ne vir eam vilificaret et nollet eam recipere in uxorem, quia nondum eam trasduxerat.' *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, testis CXCIX, p. 480.

[40] Saint Frances; Francesca Bussa dei Ponziani, later known as Santa Francesca Romana (1384–1440), was an Italian noblewoman. She was born into the Bussa family and married into the rich and influential Ponziani family. She was also a Benedictine oblate and known for her mysticism during her lifetime. On Frances' life, see Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Santa Francesca Romana. Edizione critica dei trattati latini di Giovanni Mattiotti* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), pp. 59–138. The canonization hearing was very Rome-centred and it was opened only five months after her death in 1440, resumed in 1443 and 1451, and some additional testimonies were collected in 1453. There were altogether 238 witnesses (two thirds of them were women) and several of them were interrogated multiple times in different processes. The records are edited by Placido Lugano, *I processi inediti per Francesca Bussa dei Ponziani (Santa Francesca Romana) 1440–1453* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1945); neither they nor the hearings seem to have been very rigorously organized, which may have been one of the reasons why Frances was not canonized until 1608. For the practicalities of the process, see Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Santa Francesca Romana*, pp. 141–7; Arnold Esch, 'I processi medioevali per la canonizzazione di Santa Francesca Romana (1440–1451),' in *La canonizzazione di*

Roman youth called Blaxius, was infected with a horrible disease. Some people said that she was *affacturata*, of feeble mind or enchanted, but her betrothed and others claimed she was obsessed with malign spirits. He called the plans off and did not want to have anything to do with her. The doctors could not help Stephanotia, but Frances visited and comforted her. Eventually, Stephanotia recovered, her betrothed married her, and, by the time of the hearing more than thirteen years later, they had a son or sons.[41]

In a tightly concentrated group of people in the upper levels of Roman society where the witnesses to the process of Saint Frances came from,[42] a marriage problem of this sort likely aroused considerable interest. Surprisingly, Rita Covelli, a companion of Frances as a Benedictine oblate,[43] is the only witness to the case. By the time of the hearing Stephanotia and Blaxius lived in love and harmony. This may have been another proof of a miracle, but at the same time it helped to erase the event from the collective memory. In all likelihood, the betrothed couple or their family members did not want to recall the desperation of the situation, which had jeopardized their marriage plans before Frances' intervention.

Nervousness before crucial life changes is a normal part of human life, not bound to a certain era, age, or gender. In the Middle Ages, much social, economic, and emotional tension was involved in entering into wedlock. The precariousness of the situation and potential spiritual dangers were widely acknowledged in medieval culture. The normality of nervousness, up to a certain point at least, may be the reason why wedding troubles are rare in hagiographic material; usually they were not manifested or resolved in a way that could be described as miraculous.[44] When something went clearly wrong, when the expectations of the surrounding community were not met and the bounds of permissible behaviour

Santa Francesca Romana. Santità, cultura e istituzioni a Roma tra medioevo ed età moderna. Atti del Convegno internazionale Roma, 19–21 novembre 2009, ed. by Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli and Giorgio Picasso (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013), pp. 39–51.

[41]   *I processi inediti per Francesca Bussa dei Ponziani*, p. 169.

[42]   Arnold Esch, 'Die Zeugenaussagen im Heiligsprechungsverfahren für S. Francesca Romana als Quelle zur Sozialgeschichte Roms im frühen Quattrocento,' *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 53 (1973): 93–151. Interestingly, the members of the Ponziani family did not testify in the hearings and showed little interest in the potential sanctity of their kinswoman. Anna Esposito, 'Tor de'Specchi e la società romana tra quattro e cinquecento,' in *La canonizzazione di Santa Francesca Romana*, pp. 303–16.

[43]   Frances had established an institution for oblates in Tor de'Specchi; it is described as typically Roman, but simultaneously participating in the late medieval European-wide feminine religious movement. Nevertheless, its position is seen as nearly unique; the institution remained autonomous and oblates were not bound by *clausura* but made a promise of chastity, poverty, and obedience. Mario Sensi, 'Tor de'Specchi e il movimento religioso femminile nel quattrocento,' in *La canonizzazione di Santa Francesca Romana*, pp. 259–301.

[44]   See, however, *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, 95, pp. 185–6; this particular miracle was, however, the recovery of the mother of the groom. She was severely ill and was expected to die. It was suspected that she would not survive until the wedding. Because of the invocation made by the groom, the mother recovered and could attend the feast, as the groom had pleaded.

were conspicuously broken, demonic presence offered an explanation. On these occasions interaction with a heavenly intercessor provided a method to cope with the problem.

Porous Bodies

Pregnancy and giving birth were on the top of a list of the religiously and socially laden corporeal functions of the female body; they were physically painful, dangerous, and morally tainting, but nonetheless socially expected for the majority of laywomen. In exegetical tradition childbearing was seen as a means for women's salvation, although such claims simultaneously further underlined the idea of women's inescapable carnality. In the social context, fertility was a sign of prosperity and of being a good Christian; after all, the couple was fulfilling God's command to multiply, and manifestly not practising the hidden sins of contraception or unnatural sex acts. Progeny was the justification of sex and marriage in the first place.[45]

Menstruation, pregnancy, and giving birth rendered women's porous bodies even more 'open' than normal; the bodily effluvia broke the body boundaries, and these states were considered to be particularly liminal and impure. These conditions left the woman more vulnerable to outside forces, and in particular to supernatural ones.[46] Bodily effluvia, especially menstrual blood, were also polluting, rendering women vulnerable to other sorts of pollution such as spirit possession. In some medical treatises, these ideas were even pushed as far as considering menstruating female bodies to be poisonous for men.[47] On a conceptual level, the linkage between pregnancy and demonic possession was apparent; they were corporeal states in which a female body housed a strange being. This idea was particularly emphasized by Cathars, who equated pregnant women with demoniacs. According to their set of beliefs, this world was created by the lesser, evil God, hence anything that contributed to its continuation was polluting. Therefore, Cathars could exclude

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[45] On the legitimatization of sex and begetting progeny, see Taglia, 'Marriage's Original Purpose and First Good,' pp. 151–73.

[46] Open body schema, the idea that bodies had weak boundaries against the outside world and could be penetrated and influenced by outside (supernatural) powers, is usually applied to traditional societies and a magical worldview. See, for example, Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises*, pp. 99–101. Mary Douglas sees body boundaries as corresponding to social boundaries, and so bodily pollution is a symbolic expression of the threat to the social order posed by undesirable contacts. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*. On medical discussions of the mouth of the womb opening up to receive semen, Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 92.

[47] On the poisonousness of menses, see Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 74–6. On debates about purity and pollution in Christ's incarnation, see Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 124–31.

a pregnant woman from their rites, even from the deathbed *consolamentum*, and direct claims of pregnant women carrying a devil in their belly can be found in the depositions of inquisition trials from the thirteenth century.[48] Nancy Caciola argues for this connection in Catholic material, too; she gives examples of the swelling of the stomach of the possessed women, and of rare occasions when the possessing spirit exited through the vagina, like a foetus.[49]

It remains unknown whether the laity associated demonic possession with pregnancy; even male bodies or infants could display swellings as symptoms, and demons were thought to dwell literally within the entrails, as Caesar of Heisterbach claimed and many examples of swallowed demons exemplify.[50] A swelling could also be explained as an imbalance of bodily fluids. Humoral theory offers one potential justification for the preponderance of female demoniacs. It taught that male and female complexion were different. Since women were composed of wet and cold properties, their natural complexion made them potential phlegmatics, a complexion deemed particularly unspiritual. Yet, the wetness of their complexion made them prone to mutability and a desire for novelty. These physiological components made women all the more credulous about otherworldly experiences.[51] The womb was defined as cold and moist, and moisture was the source of women's reproductive powers, but it also linked them more closely to decay.[52]

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[48]   Peter Biller, 'Cathars and Material Women,' in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, pp. 61–107, esp. pp. 99–101. While the majority of scholars have seen Catharism as a distinct sect or Church with distinctive dogmas, organization, and hierarchy, currently the boundaries between Cathar followers and members of the Catholic Church are often seen as blurred. See, for example, Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, p. 163 *et passim*. For other recent contributions, see Bruschi, *The Wandering Heretics of Languedoc* and Caterina Bruschi and Peter Biller, eds., *Texts and the Repression of Medieval Heresy* (York: York Medieval Press, 2003). Mark Gregory Pegg (*The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245–1246* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001)) argues, however, for the unorganized nature of the Cathar sect and does not see it as a distinct Church.

[49]   Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 218.

[50]   On cases with a swelling stomach as a sign of demonic possession, see 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 235. On the symptoms of a ten-year-old possessed boy: 'Huius stomacus aliquociens intantum intumuit, quod supra pectus usque ad mentum se videbatur erigere, ac si magnum quid corporeum curreret in visceribus eius.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 142; on the symptoms of a two-year-old girl: 'pedes et totum corpus quasi in circulum retro ad dorsum girabantur pectusque et venter vehementer inflabant et tumuerunt,' p. 176; see also p. 130. According to Anders Fröjmark ('Demons in the miracula,' p. 277), the swellings may have been an attempt to describe convulsions. Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, 15.

[51]   According to scholastic medicine, the complexion of the human body was defined by elementary qualities (hot, dry, cold, and moist). The humoral pathology considered four bodily fluids (blood, yellow bile, phlegm, and black bile) as active agents affecting complexion and health. On complexion in scholastic medicine, see Timo Joutsivuo, 'How to Get a Melancholy Marquess to Sleep? Melancholy in Scholastic Medicine,' in *Mental (Dis)Order*, pp. 21–46. On humoral theory, sexual differences, and gender order, see Miri Rubin, 'The Person of the Form: Medieval Challenges to the Bodily Order,' in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 100–22; Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, pp. 183–8; and Elliott, *Proving Woman*, pp. 206–7.

[52]   Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, p. 27. Claude Thomasset, 'The Nature of Woman,' in *A History of Women in the West, vol. II. Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Christiane Klapisch-Züber (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 43–69, esp. p. 62.

Fertility was a pivotal concern because it secured the survival of family, community, and the whole society, but women's uncontrollable procreative powers caused anxiety, some of which was expressed by using demons.

Various examples of demonic possession and even clear references to a pregnancy-like state can be found in Birgitta's process. The aforementioned Cristina suffered from a swelling as a manifestation of demonic presence. According to the narration constructed by the local clergy, women touching the tormented demoniac reported that they sensed something moving inside her entrails, as if she was close to giving birth.[53] These women did not, however, testify. A further case in point is the deposition of *dominus* Petrus Olavi, who was a subprior of the Cistercian monastery of Alvastra. He had been a confessor to Birgitta and had written down her revelations during her visionary years in Sweden. He was particularly active in testifying to the exorcizing powers of Birgitta: there are thirteen cases in his deposition that could be labelled as possession or harassment by demons.[54] Moreover, many of them were of a sexual nature. For example, an unnamed woman was tormented by an *incubus*, a demon in a male form. As a consequence, the woman's stomach swelled as if she was close to giving birth, but soon, however, it would shrink, looking like there was nothing inside.[55] Thus her body, invaded by an unclean spirit, mimicked horrifyingly the mystical pregnancy which Birgitta herself, like many other female mystics of the era, was privileged with.[56] This woman was tormented because of her infidelity and sexual incontinence, if we are to believe Petrus. Birgitta was informed of the reason in a vision by Christ himself. Her punishment was a logical consequence of her misdemeanour, then. However, the woman was cured after the fervent prayers of Birgitta and other *amici Dei*, the confession of sins, and her participation in the Eucharist. In this case pregnancy, demonic possession, and impurity were all clearly linked. Rather than the actual thinking and practices of the laity, this instance of possession reflects the learned theories of the era and reveals the liminal state expectant mothers were thought to occupy.

Given the mixed and contradictory cultural tradition as well as the physical dangers of childbirth, pregnancy was an anxiety-laden state, and supernatural aid and explanations were probably essential. Many things could go wrong in the delivery and in the post-partum period; on such occasions there may have been a need to find someone or something to blame, and these anxieties could have been cloaked in religious garb. Giving birth was also a social event. The space itself,

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[53] 'et testificate sunt mulieres eam tangentes se sentire aliquid corporeum ita moveri in visceribus eius, ac si foret vicina partui.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 122.

[54] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 472–562.

[55] 'quod quedam femina a demonio incubo frequenter vexabatur, propter quam vexacionem eius venter sic intumescebat, quod quasi in breui tempore partus appropinquaret. Ad tempus vero venter eius desrescebat intantum, quod sibi in ventre nichil habere videbatur.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 541.

[56] See Elliott, *Bride of Christ*, pp. 225–7.

the birth chamber, was private and entrance restricted to the closest and most appreciated female friends, neighbours, and relatives, but a certain amount of publicity was required to ensure the legitimacy of the offspring and later verify his or her coming of age.[57] Lyndal Roper has found that in early modern Germany many of the witchcraft accusations were made by newly delivered mothers. Being invited to the birth chamber was an important affirmation of one's position within the community and being left out was considered an insult. Roper argues that the guilt of a birthing mother could have been later projected onto an excluded woman in the form of witchcraft accusations.[58]

It seems that demonic presence did not offer a similar outlet for fear in hagiographic material: the birthing chamber does not appear as a scene for demonic possession, and expectant and parturient mothers are very rare in such cases.[59] One of the rare exceptions is Palmeria, who appears in the canonization process of Ambrose of Massa in the early 1240s. Palmeria was pregnant and gave birth to a stillborn boy. Only after giving birth did the symptoms of possession begin: she hit her husband, shouted, and could not listen to the words of the Holy Gospel.[60] Pregnancy was not given as the reason for her affliction. However, her condition, the opened body boundaries, may have rendered her more vulnerable, even though the reason for her affliction was spiritual: she was a victim of a malediction. She was possessed at a well in a churchyard in Viterbo. A woman who wanted to drink before her had told her that she would drink thousands of demons in the water, and so she apparently did. The malediction, and not the pregnancy, was the essential element in this case: it was cited in other versions of this miracle in other compilations, not only in the deposition of Palmeria.[61]

Blasius, her husband, was the other witness to the case, and he agreed with his wife about the malediction. However, he implied that there may have been other reasons for the affliction, too. First of all, Palmeria had gone to the consecration of a church against his will. Blasius' aim seems to have been first and foremost to exculpate himself from responsibility for this tragedy. After all, it was his duty as a husband to protect his wife from physical and especially from moral dangers. Possibly, pregnancy added to the weight of these responsibilities. The need for

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[57] Gail McMurray Gibson, 'Scene and Obscene: Seeing and Performing Late Medieval Childbirth,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999): 7–24 and John Bedell, 'Memory and Proof of Age in England 1272–1327,' *Past and Present* 162 (1999): 3–27.

[58] Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[59] The paucity of cases should be contextualized with other miracles including problems in conception, giving birth, and the post-partum period. All these types are rare; the proportion of these miracles was 3.3 per cent in the later Middle Ages. Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident*, p. 547. See also Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, pp. 165–266 for earlier cases.

[60] 'Processus canonizationis B. Ambrosii Massani,' pp. 594–5. See Chave-Mahir, *L'exorcism des possédes*, p. 255 for other cases connecting malediction and eating or drinking.

[61] Thomas of Pavia, *Dialogus de gestis sanctorum fratrum minorum*, pp. 157–8.

extra protection for pregnant women was widely acknowledged.[62] According to Blasius, the woman giving the malediction was a prostitute, a *meretrix*. Blasius was not, however, accusing his wife of moral transgression even if she did not obey his commands. According to his deposition, Palmeria had made the sign of the cross before sipping the water.[63] Thus, her actions at the churchyard were not blameworthy, and she was an innocent victim.

Pregnancy made women vulnerable to many kinds of hazards, be they physical, social, or spiritual. This may have been connected with impurity and even with the demonic, as the deposition of Petrus Olavi shows. When the participants testified, the rationale seems to have been different. As far as the depositions in canonization processes allow us to deduce, it was not the impurity of the expectant mothers that enabled demons to gain power over them. Both Blasius and Palmeria seem to have gone to considerable lengths to prove their innocence. Attending a consecration of a church should be, if anything, beneficial to one's soul. Furthermore, who could be blamed for a sip of water, especially if the sign of the cross was made over it? Finally, pregnancy seems to have protected Palmeria as the symptoms began only after the stillbirth. The guilt was projected onto outsiders; first onto a sinful other woman and then onto demons. For Palmeria and Blasius, demonic presence was not caused by impurity, but rather it offered an outlet when something went wrong in a precarious situation. The misfortune of losing a newborn baby was all too common in medieval society; blaming demons for the signs of distress and sorrow and invoking a saint for help was a coping mechanism, a method to overcome heartbreak, to compensate for one's vulnerability in the face of tragedy.

Women's linkages with the diabolical did not cease once their childbearing years were over; quite the contrary. An old woman, *vetula*, was readily used in moral and vernacular texts during the Middle Ages as an archetype of a notorious sinner.[64] *Vetulae* were typically depicted as wily and witty, as acting as go-betweens between illicit lovers or between demons and sinners, or they could entice Christians to other kinds of sins.[65] Condemnation of and contempt for older

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[62]   Lett, *L'enfant des miracles*, pp. 252–4. See also Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla et sermones vulgares*, p. 95. 'alii astantes dubitarent quod per dolore et angustia perderet partum suum.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 126r; 'Et est sciendum quod dicta Alicia apparebat […] ut dixerunt gravida et adeo partu propinqua quod ad precencia dominorum Episcoporum predictorum venire comode non potuisset.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 53v.

[63]   'Processus canonizationis B. Ambrosii Massani,' p. 595.

[64]   On the origins of the concept of the *vetula* and its use in moral and vernacular treatises, see Gretchen Mieszkowski, 'Old Age and Medieval Misogyny: The Old Woman,' in *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. by Albrecht Classen (München: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), pp. 299–319 and Karen Pratt, 'De vetula: The Figure of the Old Woman in Medieval French Literature,' in *Old Age in the Middle Ages*, pp. 321–42. On the *vetula* in pseudo-Ovidian poetry, see Sarah Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 9–52.

[65]   Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon dominicain du 13e siècle*, ed. by A. Lecoy del a Marche (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1877), p. 245.

women were not just moral phenomena but could also be found in medical discourses and in ideas about corporeality. Old women, especially poor ones, could be dangerous and poisonous since the toxic fluids no longer exited their bodies with their menses. Despite the menopausal changes, their bodies were nonetheless associated with inappropriate openness: the firm and attractive body of a virgin with ordered and closed orifices had transformed into a loose, leaky, and unattractive body, one that was, moreover, characterized by aggressive talkativeness. Female corporeality was unstable because of the reproductive life course; the female body, crystallized in the figure of the *vetula*, transgressed categories, manifested non-compliance to norms, and signified decay. The old and menopausal woman was demonized, and the figure of the *vetula* also served as a prototype for witches.[66]

Conclusions

Despite being a spiritual state, demonic possession was also a very concrete physical phenomenon. In addition, it was markedly a feminine phenomenon. Sexuality and corporeality were interconnected with demonic possession, even if women's bodies or physical changes in them were not openly blamed for demonic presence in the depositions. Ideas about female corporeality encapsulating sinful sexuality and impurity were articulated in the depositions and narrations of the clergy. They could be expressed in notions connecting demonic presence to pregnancy, thus revealing a close and concrete connection between the feminine and the diabolical. However, this line of reasoning is set forth only by clerics of high rank. Good examples can be found in the narration of the Bishop of Linköping and in the deposition of Petrus Olavi, a subprior.

Ideas about impurity were occasionally reflected in lay depositions as well, as the indecency of Guillelmina's symptoms testify. It seems, however, that female corporeality was not inevitably linked with the demonic in daily negotiations, and changes in the female body were not seen as an underlying cause for possession. The body itself, also the body of a demoniac, had other connotations than impurity. Bodily powers and capacities were necessary for work, securing a livelihood, and the continuation of the family. In the struggles of daily life, health and the ability to work, and not just sexuality or the threat to salvation, were concepts readily associated with the body. They also affected the way both gender and demonic presence were understood. Demonic possession endangered these positive and

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[66] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, pp. 75–6. Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body*, pp. 3, 143–4. The idea of the *vetula* is reflected in the canonization processes, as well; according to a chaplain called Petrus, an unnamed old woman, *vetula*, gave Dulcia poison, which led to her affliction. 'Requisitus quo hoc accidit ei dixit quod maritus dicte Dulcie et eius garcia hoc fieri procuraverunt per instrucionem cuiusdam vetule.' Vatican City, BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4019, f. 76r.

necessary features of corporeality and replaced them with illness and incapacity, hence endangering the coping strategies of the family and individual.

It was the physical and social dangers inherent in marriage and procreation that were conveyed by the lay participants, any moral blemish seeming to hold little or no interest for them. In such precarious situations, arguing for demonic presence could offer an escape, a mechanism to express sexually related anxieties and fears that could not have been aired otherwise. More than merely offering a language to voice anxieties related to the body and sexuality, as Moshe Sluhovsky envisages, cases of demonic possession may have also offered a way to cope with the situation. Being pregnant and giving birth were liminal situations involving various hazards; supernatural powers may have been blamed for unexpected tribulations, but they also offered a coping mechanism. Demons harassed women at their most vulnerable, but heavenly intercession also offered a way out of the situation.

Obviously, the lay and clerical spheres were not opposed to or even detached from each other. Canonization processes themselves formed a nexus of ideas from different backgrounds, as personal experiences and communal interpretations had to be moulded into a form acceptable to and understandable by the inquisitorial committee. Despite this shared ground, there seem to have been differing perspectives when demonic presence in the female body was considered. For the clergy, it was more readily both a sign of and reason for impurity; for the lay participants, it was the fear of vulnerability rather than of impurity that was expressed by the language of the demonic.

4
Community Responses to Demonic Presence

Demonic possession exposed the boundaries of normalcy by deviating from it. Possession was a social phenomenon, a shared construction requiring collective negotiation; the diagnosis was neither simple nor straightforward, and treatment and searching for a cure were joint enterprises. Demonic possession was essentially a behavioural category: demoniacs had stepped beyond the bounds of proper conduct and manifested various anomalies in their actions. On a personal level this led to an inversion of identity, but demonic presence also jeopardized communal peace and harmony. This chapter will show that communities responded to demonic threats with very concrete measures: by searching for a diagnosis and cure and by finding ways to treat the deviant during the affliction. Diagnosing different symptoms and categorizing various conditions were not simple tasks because the possessed were mentally incapacitated, and distinguishing between demonic possession and other forms of mental disorders was complicated, since many of the symptoms were similar and the categories partly overlapping. The claim that there was a generally accepted cultural concept of demonic possession is examined in this chapter, which finds that the depositions to canonization processes point rather to more nuanced, fragmented, and multifaceted negotiation of this phenomenon by the communities involved.

The production and manifestation of emotions illuminate the community's reaction to the deviant individual as well as the approach to the phenomenon in general. An emotional outpouring may be seen as an expected response to demonic possession. After all, a family member or a neighbour was taken over by a malevolent supernatural creature which tormented his victims and made them act disruptively, thus shaking the balance of the whole community. Furthermore, miracle narrations are structured as emotive scripts: they proceed from one emotion to another. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that the typical emotional elements characteristic of the hagiographic genre are not emphasized in cases of mental disorder. Reading against the grain does, however, reveal other emotional responses which the demonic presence provoked among community members.

Another major issue the community needed to handle was also the question of treatment. As Chapters 2 and 3 have shown, demoniacs were typically seen as innocent victims. They may have fallen prey to demons solely because of bad luck or personal vulnerability, and so they did not, under normal circumstances, deserve

to be punished. They were, however, often aggressive and could not take care of themselves, causing irritation or even anger. Demonic possession does not, however, seem to be a categorization used to marginalize members of the community who had already been deemed deviant. As the long-lasting symptoms and joint efforts for cure show, the victims were tolerated and finally integrated back into society.

Amens Seu Demoniata: The Difficulty of Diagnosis

'The spirit or demon gains control of the victim's senses, action and speech, and behaves in ways which are universally recognized as symptomatic of possession, suggesting that such behaviour may be learned,' Michael Goodich argued.[1] In his recent book, Brian P. Levack follows a similar logic: according to him, an unwritten cultural script guided the performance of the demoniacs. All demoniacs of all eras, 'whether ill or not, whether duplicitous or not, were following theatrical scripts that were encoded in their religious cultures.'[2] The aim of this chapter is to scrutinize these claims critically. On a general level, it is possible to agree with them: all miraculous recoveries were cultural performances up to a certain point. Examples of actual previous miraculous incidents as well as literary models guided the performance and the later narrations of events and symptoms. However, to apply the idea of a cultural script in cases of demonic possession would inevitably mean that there were indisputable signs telling of demonic presence in a victim. As we have already seen, the reasons, if they were given, were many and interpreted in various ways. Furthermore, there is an even greater degree of variety in the symptoms: there were some largely accepted signs that can be found in many cases. However, the same or similar symptoms could be categorized differently in different contexts: exactly the same symptoms could lead to different classifications. Not even the most telling signs, like blaspheming God or saints, or abhorrence of sacred places or objects, led directly to a communal diagnosis of demonic possession. There was ample room for various interpretations, of symptoms, background reasons, and curative rituals as well as of descriptions of events. The explanations emerging from depositions form a polyphonic choir, not one single, well-arranged script.

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[1] Goodich, 'Battling the Devil in Rural Europe,' p. 145.
[2] Levack, *The Devil Within*, pp. 140 ff. Similarly, Michael de Certeau uses the theatre metaphor for the events and participants in Loudun. Michael de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. by Michael B. Smith (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2000). Cf. Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle, 'Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon and Early Modern England: Continuity and Evolution in a Social Context,' *Journal of British Studies* 47 (2008): 738–67, here p. 739: 'possession cannot be construed as a physical manifestation of a particular strand of biblicism, nor can it be treated as a static ontological category with a fixed and stable meaning.'

The approach to demonic presence seems to have varied from one context to another, from one hearing to another, and there were several actors involved in each interrogation. On occasion, witnesses proposed a different kind of categorization for a case from what the commissioners were willing to accept, as some commissioners required extra proof for accepting demons as a cause for an affliction. This was not always the case, however, and sometimes the inquisitorial committee, whether appointed by the pope or formed on the local level, seem to have chosen demons as an explanation even if the witnesses were proposing a different kind of categorization. Clarifying questions could have been posed to sort out whether the case was a genuine miracle, 'natural' cure, or possibly a result of superstitious or magical rites, but to ascertain demonic presence by additional questions was not the norm; in the majority of cases, the methods of categorizing afflictions are not exemplified or inquired into.

Often, the witnesses, and at least some of the members of inquisitorial committees, were not certain of the categorization and diagnosis. The symptoms of demonic possession overlapped with those of raving madness, for example, and sometimes they commingled with purely physical symptoms, too. The confusion is understandable, since many of the symptoms were seen as behavioural anomalies, and raving madness was also a behavioural category. There were no means for neurological analysis and symptoms were considered more important in diagnosis than aetiology. The main difference was that the cases of demonic possession were categorized, explained, and solved solely by religious concepts, methods, and rituals. It seems that none of the variable symptoms was conclusive; the diagnosis was always a result of communal negotiation and potential interpretations were many. The dividing lines between various states were not explicit.

A case in point is Philippucia, the wife of Vannucius Iohannis. She suffered from an illness that had mainly physical symptoms: it made her tremble. She was described by witnesses at the canonization hearing of Nicholas of Tolentino (AD 1325) to be like a trembling demoniac (*quasi demoniaca cum maximo tremore*).[3] This description was apparently accepted without further ado by the inquisitorial committee; no clarifying questions were posed or extra proof required, which was quite typical for Italian hagiographic material. A strict diagnosis of the condition was not a major concern for Cardinal William Godin, either. He was a curialist in charge of compiling the abbreviation of the canonization process after *inquisitio in partibus*. In this *relatio*, cases of demonic possession and raving madness, including the aforementioned Philippucia, were listed under the same heading.[4]

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[3] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis CCLXIII–CCLXIV, pp. 541–2.

[4] 'de demoniacis invasacis seu evanitis et adrabicis liberatis,' BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, f. 27r. The *relatio* was composed soon after the actual hearing, as it was presented to Pope John XXII in 1328. See also Domenico Gentili, 'Introduzione,' in *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, pp. IX–XXVII, esp. p. XVI.

Philippucia's own opinion is missing, though; as she did not testify herself, we do not know how she understood her condition.

The dividing line in diagnosing did not follow clerical and lay status. Obviously, the clergy's theological education and general knowledge of religious matters yielded wider perspectives and more profound ways for them to analyse spiritual phenomena, and potentially medical ones, as well. Inquisitorial committees did not, however, form a uniform group. In some canonization processes, demonic possession seems to have been the interpretation chosen by the inquisitorial committee, not by the witnesses.[5] For example, in the canonization process of Charles of Blois, carried out in Angers in 1371, a case was labelled as a demonic possession by the inquisitorial committee contrary to the witnesses' claims. Guillamecta was a girl of three years when she had a sudden night-time seizure during which she was frightened, delusional, and aggressive. Her parents described her as being out of her mind, but no direct mentions of demons can be found.[6] However, the inquisitorial committee had titled the case *de demoniaca liberata*. This categorization is further emphasized in the *relatio*, the abbreviation of the records. The case is grouped with deliveries from malign spirits, and the description of the event explained that Guillamecta became suddenly possessed (*subito demoniata fuit*), even if this is not what her parents claimed.[7]

Guillamecta's behaviour, her violence and aggression towards her parents, fitted well into the general patterns of demonic possession. However, it goes without saying that a three-year-old girl could not yet have internalized the values of the surrounding society in such a manner that she would have been able to knowingly perform the role of a demoniac. Judging by their depositions, the parents were conscious of many theological elements in the field of the cult of saints. Petrus, the father, was, for example, worried about his wife's veneration of an uncanonized saint and cautioned her not to call Charles a saint in public.[8]

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[5] For Nordic examples, where raving madness does not seem to have been a separate condition and the interrogators did not require solid proof for demonic presence, see *Processus canonizacionis beati Nicolai Lincopensis*, pp. 294, 366; *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 110, 138; 'Vita s. Brynolphi Episc. Scarensis cum processu eius canonizationis,' p. 169.

[6] According to Petrus, the father, she was 'furore arrepta et subita facta fuit furiosa.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, f. 99r; Mathea, the mother, also underlined the abruptness of the event: 'ad instar furore insurgebat adversus maritum suum,' f. 99v.

[7] Depositions for this case and the title are BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, ff. 121r–128r. The *relatio* is preserved in one manuscript ASV Collect. 434; for this case, see ff. 110r–110v. According to Vauchez, 'Canonisation et politique au XIVe siècle,' p. 389, ASV Collect. 434A, containing the records of the canonization hearing of Charles of Blois, is a copy of BAV Vat. Lat. 4025: relatio in ASV Collect. 434 would be based on ASV Collect. 434A. This case is particularly interesting also for the contrasting rhetoric of the parents as well as the way their negotiation over authority and devotion can be found in the depositions. For further analysis of these elements in this case, see Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Narrative Strategies in the Depositions.'

[8] 'dictaque uxor sua dicit se credere ipsum esse sanctum, et ipsum vocabat sanctum Carolum, testis iste dictam suam uxorem, Matheam nomine, increpavit, dicendo predicte uxori sue ista verba, Mathea vos potestis habere devocionem apud ipsum dominum Carolum, et eumdem orare in secreto. Sed

Mathea, the mother, was fully aware that saints themselves did not perform miracles, but God's power worked through them; therefore, she was also willing and able to utter a rather elegant prayer to Saint Charles to plead for Christ and the Virgin Mary to let their mercy flow down upon her daughter.[9] Given this background and their social positions, *civis* and his wife in an episcopal city, they would have, quite plausibly, been aware of the general signs and symptoms of demonic possession as they were formulated by the clergy. Both, however, declined to put their experience of the affliction of their daughter within this framework. They, and particularly Mathea, used another topos instead, that of the punishment miracle; in her interpretation Petrus did not just warn her about showing public devotion to Charles, he actually argued against Charles' sanctity. She used the narrative frame of a saint punishing an unbeliever to give meaning to and explain their experiences and their daughter's affliction.

A peculiar and exceptional case was recorded in the canonization process of Thomas Cantilupe (AD 1307). The recovery of Editha is an ambiguous case, with witnesses giving contradictory testimonies and also appearing to hold different views from the inquisitorial committee. Another exceptional feature is the meticulousness with which this case was recorded, which facilitates an analysis of the methods of categorization and processes of labelling. Near the end of the thirteenth century, two decades before the hearing, Editha, the wife of Robertus, an ironmonger, went mad. The seizure hit her one night during Lent, but witnesses were uncertain whether she was raving mad or possessed by a demon. They used the word *furiosa* when describing Editha's violent behaviour and screaming. Editha did not eat or drink anything for several days but screamed constantly and mindlessly; she was so aggressive that she needed to be tied down.[10]

In Roman law *furiosus* was the term for a raging, passionate, or unsettled person; it could indicate low or limited capacity for reason and/or lack of bodily control. *Furiosi* were often violent, but could have lucid intervals. In medieval English court records, *furiosus* was in use for describing mental incapacity; it denoted someone lacking control, but the condition was not regarded as congenital.[11] These elements may have been part of the categorization of Editha's case, too.

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caveatis ne ipsum in publico vocetis sanctum Carolum, donec canonizatus fuit, quia per hec possemus multum dampnisicari, et per officialis reprehendi, et forsan non est sanctus, nec credere debemus quod sit sanctus quosquod per ecclesiam fuit approbatus.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, f. 99r.

[9] Mathea invoked Saint Charles twice: 'ut misericordiam suam supra dictam filiam infunderet dignanter,' and 'Sancte Carole si verum sit quod sitis sanctus in paradiso et quod meritis vestris intercedens dominus Jhesus Cristus pro vobis dignacio sit aliquam operari, pro dei misericordiam impetratis sanitatem pro filia mea apud dominum Jhesum Cristum et beatam virginem mariam vel quod ipsa filia mea in brevi moriatur et eam vobis voveo.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4025, f. 99v.

[10] There were eleven witnesses in the case; the depositions are in BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 211r–219v.

[11] Turner, *Care and Custody*, pp. 17–19, 36–8, and 78–80.

Among the questions posed was one about the timing, duration, and potential intervals of the symptoms. Others did not know, but her husband stated that Editha did not have *dilucida intervalla*.[12]

Gilbertus, the official of Hereford cathedral and later proctor of the Cantilupe process, assumed that possession was the reason for Editha's fury. He uses both words *arepticia*, rapt, and *furia*, fury, when describing her. *Arripere*, to tear away someone from their right senses, was also used for the actions of unclean spirits in the Vulgate (Luke 8:29).[13] Editha's husband Robertus also thought that she was possessed by a spirit, but he admitted that he had not seen her doing anything, such as changing places or other unnatural things, by the power of malevolent spirits. One of the questions about demons raised by Thomas Aquinas was whether they had the power to move bodies from one place to another. The inquisitorial committee posed this additional clarifying question; they did not accept uncritically the claims of supernatural forces as an explanation.[14]

Robertus also gave quite a down-to-earth explanation for Editha's condition: she became afflicted during Lent when she had eaten very little, but had drunk a lot, so he argued that Editha was drunk when she went mad.[15] The other witnesses were asked if they could name a particular cause for the affliction, but most could not provide an explanation. In addition to their inability to give a clear reason for the affliction, the witnesses were not certain of its classification, either. They did not know whether Editha was possessed or raving mad, implying that the categorization was not clear and fixed in cases like this. Apparently, it was not of great importance for the lay witnesses since the categorization did not come up spontaneously. The commissioners, on the other hand, deemed the categorization important and they wanted to draw the defining line. Once the first witness, *vicarius* Gilbertus, had claimed that Editha was *arepticia*, the other witnesses, who were of lay status, were interrogated on the matter to clarify the situation.[16] The commissioners

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[12] The answer of Robertus Coke: 'Item requisitus si dicta mulier erat arepticia sive demoniaca dixit se nescire nec ex qua causa paciebatur furorem. Item requisitus per quantum tempus ante dictum miraculum fuerat furiosa et si habebat dilucida intervalla. Respondit se nescire vel ut supra deposuit.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 214r. This question was not explicitly recorded in the deposition of Robertus, Editha's husband. It may have been an additional question which was not written down in the records, or a detail which came up spontaneously: 'in dicto tempore fuit continue furiosa, nec habuit dilucida intervalla,' f. 215r.

[13] 'sed credit quod esset arepticia.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 212v. He also uses the word *furia*. For *arepticus*, see Young, *A History of Exorcism*, p. 21.

[14] 'credit quod fuit arepticia sed tamen non vidit quod portaretur nec mutaretur de loco ad locum nec quod fecerit aliquem actum ex potencia malignorum spirituum.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 215v, also f. 215r. On Aquinas, see Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, p. 292.

[15] '…dicta furia accidit sibi ut estimat quia parum comedebat et multum bibebat […] et erat valde ebria.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 215r.

[16] 'Item requisitus si dicta mulier erat arepticia sive demoniaca dixit se nescire nec ex qua causa paciebatur furorem.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 214r; 'nescit tamen quanto tempore sibi duravit furia supradicta, nec ex qua causa in eam inciderit nec si habebat dilucida intervalla nec ita si erat arepticia,' f. 217v. Others assumed that Editha was not possessed 'nec erat arepticia sed frenetica,' f. 216v also f. 218v and f. 219r.

did not get a straight answer from the majority of the witnesses, but in the records, the case was titled as *Editha furiosa*. Thus, the definition made by the inquisitorial committee was clear. The reason for this was undoubtedly the ambiguity of the signs and the inability of the witnesses to provide any clear evidence of demonic presence. The Cantilupe process was carried out with exceptional judicial rigour and the commissioners seem to have followed the logic that became officially established only in the *Rituale Romanum* in 1614: natural and supernatural explanations were mutually exclusive, and cases should be categorized as supernatural only if they were so in an obvious way.[17]

The fact that Editha died the following summer, a few months after the incident, as well as her condition after the cure, may have further clarified the situation. Many of the witnesses stated that after the cure Editha was of healthy mind (*sana mente*), but physically she did not recover: she remained weak (*debilis*), and needed to be carried or supported by others since she could not walk by herself.[18] Such physical symptoms undoubtedly reinforced the validity of the physical, not spiritual, explanations. Reliable proof, or the lack thereof, seems to have been the major motivation for the inquisitorial committee's classification. Editha's case is exceptional, since witnesses were asked for exact categorizations. For them, background reasons or exact categorizations were not crucial; symptoms, and particularly their social consequences, mattered most.[19]

Vacillation on the part of witnesses between various categories can also be found in the canonization process of Louis of Toulouse (AD 1308), where we encounter four cases suitable for close analysis: Beatrix, the aforementioned Guillelmina, Bartholomeus, and Raymundus. There are three depositions concerning Beatrix's affliction; Beatrix herself was not interrogated since by the time of the interrogation she was already dead. She was the wife of Leo de Vestia of the city of Nice, and around the year 1300 she lost her mind. Apparently, she was afraid her mother had died on a pilgrimage to Rome and she went mad because of confusion and grief, as her husband explained. However, other witnesses to the case offered a different kind of explanation. They argued that one morning, Leo de Vestia was at the market buying meat and when he got home he frightened his wife. Beatrix

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[17] Midelfort, 'Natur und Besessenheit,' p. 81. The case of Editha was not analysed in the *summarium* of the process (Paris, BN MS Lat. 5373A, ff. 66r–69v) or listed among the miracles in the canonization bull of Thomas Cantilupe. The reason is likely the discrepancy of depositions. Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident*, pp. 569–80.

[18] 'quia erat debilis et non poterat ire […] in dicta debilitate nequiens ire nisi coadiuvaretur et suportaretur ab aliis, dixit dicta uxor sua in sana mente et sine furia in debilitate tamen et infirma usque ad festum ad vincula sancti petri vel circa et tunc obiit.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 216r.

[19] In the registers of the miracles of Thomas Cantilupe collected at his shrine before the official canonization hearing and copied at the end of the manuscript containing the canonization dossier, there were no cases of demonic possession, either. The mentally disordered people were labelled as *demens*, *freneticus*, or *furiosus*. The case of Editha was summarized in the following manner: 'Item mulier quaedam Editha nomine de Wynconensis ab uno anno et amplius furiosa per suffragium viri dei ad ipsius tumulum rectum sensum celitus est adepta.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 255v.

said: 'Did you come here to kill me with that knife?', and then she lost her mind. Even if depicting a completely different image of familial relations, both witnesses use fear as an explanation for Beatrix's affliction.[20]

Witnesses thought Beatrix suffered from a mental illness. They defined her as mad, *amens* or out of her mind, *dessenata*; and her situation as insanity, *insania*, madness, *amencia*, *demencia*, or fury, *furor*, apparently using these terms synonymously. It remains unknown how and if they could have categorized the differences between these states, since they did not explicate them, nor were they asked to specify them. Despite the traditional and telling symptoms, Beatrix was not categorized as a demoniac. Her head shook and shivered and her eyes rolled; she ran aimlessly here and there. She was violent up to the point that she tried to hurt people present, including herself, with knives, wooden logs, or stones; to prevent this she needed to be tied down. She also caused other kinds of social nuisance amongst her neighbours by using filthy and dishonest words and being coarse and insulting. Most incriminating, however, was that she also blasphemed saints, the Virgin Mary, and God. Aggression, violence, and being out of one's mind were typical symptoms not only of demonic possession but also of raving madness. The difference between demonic possession and raving madness in canonization processes was often blasphemy and the abhorrence of sacred objects; they were usually treated as quite definite signs. Not all demoniacs manifested them, but they are not typically found among the symptoms of the mad.[21]

Even if Beatrix possessed some of the most telling signs of demonic presence, she was not labelled as a demoniac. One potential explanation may have been the categorization preferences of the inquisitorial committee. The case of Beatrix, as well as three other similar cases, was labelled as 'of those who are raving mad and out of their minds' (*de furiosis et alientis a sensu*),[22] even if demonic possession is suggested as an explanation in other cases, as will shortly be seen. In addition to the preferences of the inquisitorial committee, the choices, ideas, and interpretations of the witnesses facilitated the categorization. One potential explanation for Beatrix's condition may have been her character. Beatrix was described as a particularly well-behaved wife and member of society. Before her affliction she was described as being 'good and discrete, staying with her husband in her house like a good woman; living honestly and peacefully and being approved by her neighbours for her goodness.' Afterwards, her conduct was once again mature and discreet (*cum maturitate et discrecione agebat*), according to her husband.[23] This affliction was a

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[20] The witnesses in this case were Leo de Vestia, Solia, the wife of Petrus Alexandrini, and Petrus Alexandrini; the depositions are in *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXIII–CLXV, pp. 218–21.

[21] Cf. Craig, 'Spirit of Madness,' p. 83 for blaspheming not being an element linked with humoral imbalance, but a clear indication of demonic presence within the body.

[22] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, p. 214.

[23] 'dixit quod ipsa vidit dictam Beatricem bonam iuvenem et discretam et stantem cum viro suo et in domo sua sicut bonam mulierem et pacifice et honeste viventem et quod faciebat se diligi propter

temporary state, which actually emphasized her honest and good conduct in ordinary situations.

Demoniacs displayed a want of docility and meekness, which were key elements in idealized femininity. They were the antithesis of the ideal 'good wife': instead of being obedient, prudent, and devout, they were insolent and irresponsible. They were not moderate but given to excess and even violent. Instead of praying to the saints and God, they blasphemed them and occasionally invoked demons.[24] It seems, however, that the witnesses were consciously fitting Beatrix's 'before' and 'after' conduct into an ideal image of a good wife.[25] Unruliness often featured in moralists' warnings and was seen as inherently linked with femininity. In Beatrix's case, the affliction and ensuing chaos were not seen as part of her innermost qualities. Gender alone does not seem to have constituted a cause of possession.

One line of argument links demonic possession more readily with more marginal members of society.[26] This may have protected Beatrix from such labels. According to the testimony of Petrus Alexandrini, Beatrix was appreciated by the whole neighbourhood. He continued by stressing the coincidental nature of the incident, arguing that God allows humans in this world to be flagellated, hence this misfortune happened to Beatrix.[27] This kind of reasoning would have fitted well as an explanation of spirit possession, too. Beatrix's near-impeccable behaviour might have been an explanation for why she was not considered to be a person whom demons were likely to prey upon. Petrus Alexandrini even claimed that the whole vicinity was compassionate and saddened by her fate for her previous

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bonitatem suam ab omnibus vicinis et notis suis.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXIIII, p. 219.

[24] For example, an unnamed women demoniac cured by the Saint Pope Urban V circled around the village and the forest day and night; she destroyed everything she could get her hands on and blasphemed God and saints. 'Item, quod quedam mulier…fuit et erat demoniata, detenta ac vexata a demone per tres annos circuens et discurrens hinc et inde per loca et nemora, nocteque die non habens requiem, destruebat quecumque tenere poterat, Deum et sanctos blasphemabat, demones invocabat et semper erat in pena et anxietate.' The canonization hearing was carried out in Avignon between 1382 and 1390. *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, 67, p. 468. In her case, blaspheming and invoking demons were undoubtedly the conclusive signs as she is the only demoniac in this dossier. Other people out of their minds were described as *mente captus* or *furiosus*, even if they (men and one woman) had many telling symptoms as well, like losing their senses and memories, violence, running aimlessly here and there, and having perplexing visions, 53, p. 158; 179, p. 246; 184, pp. 249–50; 196, p. 258.

[25] On idealized femininity, see Philips, *Medieval Maidens*. On Sarah as a pious role model for wives, see Silvana Vecchio, 'The Good Wife,' in *A History of Women in the West*, pp. 106–13. For a more thorough analysis of this case from the perspective of gender ideals, see Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, 'A Good Wife? Gender and Demonic Possession,' in *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 73–88.

[26] Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power and the Spirit Possession* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 398–400 for anthropological perspectives on the marginality of the possessed.

[27] 'Et sicut Deus permittit in hoc mundo homines flagellari, subito supervenit dicte Beatrici iste casus quod facta fuit amens et dessenata,' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXV, p. 220.

goodness' sake.[28] However, since even small children could fall victim to demonic possession, personal virtue did not offer full protection against malign spirits.

Guillelmina, the ten-year-old daughter of Iohannes Olier and Splendosa from Marseilles, who we met in Chapter 3, as well as Bartholomeus, a boy of fourteen years, were afflicted. They suffered from similar symptoms: they ate dirt and stones, tore their faces and clothes, attacked people approaching them, and bit their parents. The major difference between them was that Guillelmina was described as having indecently exposed her body and people thought she was possessed by a demon, but Bartholomeus was only described as *extra sensum*, as Alaracia, a neighbour, and many others thought.[29]

Indeed, similar or identical symptoms could be categorized differently. The preferences of the inquisitorial committee were likely decisive in classifying the cases in the dossiers, but not even the clerical elite performing as commissioners held uniform opinions concerning the phenomenon. Witnesses may have interpreted a case differently from the inquisitorial committee, and they, too, were sometimes undecided about the diagnosis. If a 'script' for demonic possession existed, it was filled with ambiguities and had many lacunae. The picture is further complicated by the fact that sometimes earthly doctors' advice was sought for the demoniacs, even if they could do little for spiritual conditions.

Earthly Medicine for Other-Worldly Afflictions

The fourth case belonging to the same group in the canonization process of Louis of Toulouse was Raymundus Oliverii, a young cleric, and an intelligent and educated man (*intelligens et litteratus*). He was also from a prosperous family as he was described as being the son of a rich man. Raymundus went out of his mind because of the frustration of losing a clerical position, as he explained in his deposition. He described how he was confused in his head up to the point where he went mad (*fuit turbatus in capite suo ita quod in furiam fuit conversus*). Raymundus described his position and cure with medical terms, explaining how his brain regained order after a vow to Saint Louis.[30]

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[28] 'tota vicina dolebat et compaciebatur ei propter bonitatem quam habuerat ante.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXV, p. 220. Her character seems to have been an important detail as it was repeated in the shortened version of the hearing as well, 'quod cum prius esset inter alias vicinas mulieres notabiliter devota prudens et honesta,' BAV Ottob. Lat. 2516, f. 42r.

[29] There are three depositions to this case: *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLX–CLXII, pp. 216–17.

[30] 'Et ex tunc inmediate invenit ipse qui loquitur suum cerebrum ordinatum et se in statu pacifico et quieto et se a predicto furore omnino curatum.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLCVI, p. 222. Mixed vocabulary of emotions and cerebral conditions was repeated in the shortened version of the hearing: 'ex quodam turbacionem animum quam passa fuit tamquam que incurrit cerebri passionem.' BAV Ottob. Lat. 2516, f. 42r. See also *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, 74–5, pp. 168–70 for similar medical vocabulary applied to Angelinus

Raymundus did not use a more sophisticated analysis of his cerebral condition, but medical theories of the era divided the brain into three regions governing human activity, knowledge, and memory. In Raymundus' case a medical diagnosis might have stated that he had problems in the anterior portion associated with action: the consequence was rage, loss of self-control, and unrestrained behaviour. According to medical treatises, such patients often had other symptoms, like fever or discoloured urine, and the underlying reason was the imbalance of humours.[31] Only behavioural symptoms are mentioned in Raymundus' case and references to humoral theory are very rare in depositions to canonization processes in general. The two witnesses, Raymundus himself and Bertrandus Mostolli, a priest from the same city of Carpentorata, used only medical terms in describing the condition. According to Bertrandus Mostolli, Raymundus was out of his mind and raving mad and later cured, not delivered from spirits. Yet both witnesses, Raymundus himself and Bertrandus, admitted that because of his symptoms people commonly believed that Raymundus was possessed by a demon, as they told him after his recovery. Bertrandus explained that this interpretation was based on the actions of Raymundus: his indecent words, signs, and bad deeds, like blaspheming God and saints; resisting his father and mother; throwing stones, bricks, sticks, and other things at people approaching him; and ripping off his clothes.[32] Following the hierarchy proposed by Bertrandus, the worst and most incriminating feature was disrespect towards the cosmological hierarchy. On a social level, opposing one's parents was worse, and apparently more easily seen as being caused by demons than disruption and violence on a communal level. Least aggravating, but a symptom nonetheless, was self-harming.

Despite this collective diagnosis, Raymundus' parents consulted doctors and followed their advice and changed his diet. Even if medical specialists were used increasingly as expert witnesses in canonization processes, these doctors were not interrogated in Raymundus' case, and they are not even mentioned by name. On a general level, the use of doctors seems to have been quite typical among the devotees of Saint Louis as their help is often mentioned in the depositions.[33] The medical diagnosis was not important for the inquisitorial committee. Rather, their intention was to find out all necessary details to verify whether the cure could have been natural or an instance of genuine divine grace. The need for this kind of categorization is exemplified in the additional question posed to some of the

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Galhardi's aching head after having escaped from a fire: 'fuit in valde gravissimo statu de capite suo, propter ardorem ignis et fumum qui iam intraverant infra cerebrum [...] et quod iam credebat quod fuisset capud suum apostematum ab infra.'

[31] Turner, *Care and Custody*, pp. 66–73.
[32] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXVII, pp. 222–3.
[33] See, for example, *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CI, p. 174; cap. CVII, p. 179; cap. CXIX, p. 188; cap. CXXV, p. 193; cap. CXXXIV, p. 199; cap. CXXXVI, p. 200: 'haberet octo medicos, sicut dixit, peritos et meliores de dicta civitate.'

witnesses in other cases; they were asked whether *figmentum*, meaning fraud or even (magical) image, or medical appliances were used in the cure.[34] All such means could also be used for demonic possession or to prevent demonic assaults. The interconnection of various healing methods can also be seen in St John's wort, the Latin name for which was *fuga daemonum*. Antispasmodic herbs were used to cure diseases with spasms, such as epilepsy and frenzy, and occasionally even possession.[35]

   Interest in natural cures in new contexts, like canonization inquiries, has led scholars to argue for the medicalization of medieval society, meaning a rise in both interest in and knowledge of the field of medicine.[36] Furthermore, physicians and medical doctors, *medici*,[37] emerge as witnesses in canonization processes from the thirteenth century on, first in Italy and in the Mediterranean area. The opinions of university-trained physicians were more easily obtained in the urban centres of southern Europe.[38] The intention of expert witnesses was to separate a natural cure from a supernatural one. Trained physicians were particularly qualified to do this since they had expertise in the field. The use of earthly medicaments would have lessened the value of the cure as a manifestation of divine grace, but emphasized the value of medicinal practitioners' expertise. However, as Didier Lett has recently pointed out, in miracle narrations the work, comments, and testimonies of physicians do not only reflect the respect given to the newly emerging science of medicine. The intention was to promote and testify to the powers of the saints in question. One of the key messages was that a heavenly remedy was more powerful than any earthly medicament. Therefore, the doctors' role was not only to make a diagnosis of the case in their depositions, it was also to fail: to testify

[34] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. LXXXX, p. 164; cap. XCI, p. 165; cap. CIV, p. 177; cap. CVI, p. 179; cap. CVIII, p. 180; cap. CXIV, p. 206: 'Interrogata utrum ope vel ingenio vel artificio aliquot vel figmento scit vel credit se esse curatam de morbo predicto.'

[35] Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 43. Muriel Laharie, *La folie au Moyen Âge XIe–XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1991), p. 210. Fasting was often recommended for demoniacs and occasionally it was a prerequisite for successful exorcism. Adolph Franz, *Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen in Mittelalter*, vol. II (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1909), pp. 562–4 and Chave-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, pp. 113–15.

[36] Louise Elizabeth Wilson, 'Conceptions of the Miraculous: Natural Philosophy and Medical Knowledge in the Thirteenth-Century *Miracula* of St Edmund of Abingdon,' in *Contextualizing Miracles in the Christian West, 1100–1500: New Historical Approaches*, ed. by Matthew M. Mesley and Louise E. Wilson (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2014), pp. 99–216; Iona McCleery. '"Christ More Powerful than Galen"? The Relationship between Medicine and Miracles,' in *Contextualizing Miracles*, pp. 127–54. See, however, Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell*, p. 37 for the argument that one of the aims of the Catholic Reformation was to encourage the laity to resort to 'ecclesiastically sponsored remedies' for their needs. Obviously, the main target was unofficial healers and magical aid, but the Catholic Church did not intend to give up easily its curative prerogatives.

[37] *Medicus* was used for officially recognized healers, like physicians or surgeons. Doctor is a typical translation, but the physicians with a university degree were the only ones actually qualified as doctors. Katherine Park, 'Medicine and Magic: The Healing Arts,' in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (London and New York: Longman, 1998), pp. 129–49.

[38] Joseph Ziegler, 'Practitioners and Saints: Medical Men in Canonization Processes in the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries,' *Social History of Medicine* 12:2 (1999): 191–225.

that they could not help the patient, that they were powerless in the face of the disease. The failure of earthly medicine served to underline the power of the divine.[39] Especially in cases of demonic possession, inquisitorial logic prevailed over the medical analysis: the diagnosis was based on behavioural symptoms and categorization was always a result of communal negotiations.

All the aforementioned cases from the canonization process of Louis of Toulouse contained the majority of the most typical signs of demonic possession, most noticeably violence, insulting, and blaspheming, but the categorization followed a different logic in these cases. It seems that the general grouping of these cases was done by the inquisitorial committee; the cases were labelled as recoveries from insanity, while the lay witnesses seem to have been willing to blame demons for at least some of these afflictions. With the general medicalization of medieval culture, the need to separate raving madness and other fits of insanity from demonic possession was increasing and fury became more clearly a medical condition. One reason was the clerical authorities' intention to clarify the distinction between demonic possession and mental disorder, as was exemplified in the case of Editha. Obviously, the emergence of medical knowledge was not the only reason, but the changes were linked with increased inquisitorial precision and changes within the Church and the field of religiosity. Simultaneously, the number of possession cases decreased in the canonization records in general and Alain Boureau states that possession cases cannot be found in canonization processes under strict clerical control.[40] On the level of lived experience, however, the distinction between illnesses and demonic possession or demonic influence remained obscure. This is shown in the famous, or notorious, cases of early modern exorcists curing various illnesses.[41]

The role of doctors was particularly ambiguous in cases of demonic possession. Since the victims suffered from a spiritual affliction, earthly medicine and its experts could do little for them. However, since the diagnosis was not always clear, in some cases the use of doctors was mentioned. These details, in turn, further emphasize the difficulty of diagnosis and contradict the ideas of universally

[39]   Didier Lett, '*Judicium medicine* and *judicium sanctitatis*: Medical Doctors in the Canonization Process of Nicholas of Tolentino (1325)—Experts Subject to Inquisitorial Logic,' in *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages. Popes, Saints and Crusaders*, ed. by Kirsi Salonen and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), pp. 153–70. See, however, Nicole Archambeau, 'Miracle Mediators as Healing Practitioners: The Knowledge and Practice of Healing with Relics,' *Social History of Medicine* (2017): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hkw132, who argues that distinguishing between medicine and miracle is anachronistic in the medieval context and miracle mediators were part of a spectrum of available healers.

[40]   Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 547–8. Boureau, 'Saints et démons dans les procès de canonisation,' pp. 203–9, 199–221.

[41]   Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting Power: The Story of an Exorcist* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988) and H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment: Johann Joseph Gassner and the Demons of Eighteenth-Century Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005). Cf. Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 236, who argues that deliveries from spirit possession did not decrease as such, but became liturgical performances carried out by the clergy.

recognized symptoms or a consensus about the phenomenon. For example, a boy called Jacobinus from thirteenth-century Perugia was afflicted; he tried to throw himself in desperation into a fire; occasionally he fell down on the ground and bit stones until his teeth cracked; he scratched his head and body so that he bled. He was more than just physically sick so he seemed to be possessed. He wanted to have medical aid but could not find anyone who knew how to help him. After his father's invocation of Saint Clare of Assisi, he was cured.[42]

Paradoxically, the multiplicity of doctors may have to some extent served to increase the number of cases labelled as demonic possession in the Italian material. An example from the canonization process of Laurent of Subiaco[43] in 1244 may illuminate this paradox. A boy called Franciscus was afflicted, having typical signs of spirit possession: he was crying day and night, and blasphemed his parents and even God. Johannes, Franciscus' grandfather, thought that he suffered from a severe infirmity. The general opinion, however, was that he was a *demoniacus*, rather than infirm. The father, *dominus* Ugolinus, explained that because of the crying, the community could hardly suffer the boy. This communal commotion may have been the reason for suspecting spirit possession and not merely an ordinary disease.[44] The parents had, nevertheless, brought a local doctor to see the boy. According to him, Franciscus had worms in his stomach and as a cure he wanted to cut the boy open to let them out. At this point, Franciscus started to shout: 'Take me to Saint Laurent.' The parents agreed and he was cured.[45] Small wonder that the patient as well as his parents thought that to embark on a pilgrimage was a safer attempt to cure the boy than to cut open his stomach. To have worms in the stomach was a severe condition. The doctor may well have been sincere in his diagnosis, but it also offered him at least some potential to make a contribution. A doctor was of little help in spiritual matters and to have pronounced a diagnosis of possession would have rendered his services futile.[46]

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[42]   'Vita s. Clare,' p. 765.

[43]   Laurent (Laurencius Loricatus) (d. 1242/3) was of humble origin; he was a soldier and after having killed a man he became an ascetic in Subiaco. He held a fame of sanctity already during his lifetime; there are fifty-eight miracles in the canonization process, and nearly two thirds of them took place *in vita*. Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 226, 587, 601. The canonization process was held in 1244 and is in one rather poorly preserved rotulus-type manuscript. Vatican City, ASV Archivum Arcis, Arm. XVIII, 3328.

[44]   'gravem infirmitatem pateretur et fere die noctuque clamaret et aliquando matri patri malediceret et contra deum etiam murmuraret ita quod amplius demoniacus putaretur.' ASV Arm. XVIII, 3328, f. 4r. Also 'is et alii plures demoniacus crederent.'

[45]   ASV Arm. XVIII, 3328, f. 4r.

[46]   See 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' p. 135 for another case of worms tormenting a patient and causing a nearly fatal condition. Cf. also the canonization process of Catherine of Sweden for vomited worms and snakes of various colours and other horrendous creatures after poisoning: 'euomuit materialem horribilem ad instar globi, in qua materia, ut asseruit, apparuerunt bene viginti capita.' *Processus seu negocium canonizacionis B. Katerine de Vadstenis*, p. 78.

A peculiar mixture of a saint as *medicus* and the need for earthly medicinal expertise can be found in the collection of miracles of Gerard Cagnoli.[47] A certain Yppolytus, a youth of twenty years, suffered from a swelling of the knee. On the fifth day he had a doctor visit him and operate on the leg. He was told the leg would be difficult to cure by nature or by art, since the cause of the illness was the accursed ones (*quia dictum est sibi quod erat de maledictis*).[48] The narration leaves the aetiology a little uncertain; it could have been a malediction that caused the affliction, but more likely Fra Bartolomeus meant demons.

In any case, the knee needed to be operated on. Other medicinal means were not thought to be effective, but a surgical operation would apparently have sufficed, even if the cause was thought to be spiritual. A surgical operation was not a light decision, though; the dangers were evident, the pain intense, and the results uncertain. Even in the best possible scenario an ugly and possibly painful scar would remain: all these reasons can be found in depositions as a reason to avoid surgery and turn to the help of a saint instead.[49] The fear is expressed in the case of Yppolytus, too. While he waited for the doctor to come, friends and relatives surrounded him and consoled him. He had invoked blessed Gerard beforehand and continued to invoke him while waiting. Then he heard a voice: 'Here come the doctors' (*ecce medici veniunt*). When he lifted his eyes, he saw Gerard and understood it was his voice; the saint disappeared but Yppolytus was miraculously comforted. The surprising element in this case is that the saint did not cure the patient in a vision, which is a recurrent theme in hagiographic material. Rather, Saint Gerard comforted Yppolytus and acted as a local anaesthetic: because of his intervention the patient did not feel any pain, even if the doctors' cure was to burn and cut the leg. They cured the incurable leg and Yppolytus made a total recovery within three days.[50]

This case is a curious example of the mingling of a traditional hagiographic topos, the saint as a *medicus*, and the medicalization of society. In this case, a doctor's help, even of the harshest kind, was considered to be a prerequisite and the most effective means for a cure. The value attached to earthly medication and doctors' expertise is even more obvious here, since the reason for the affliction was spiritual and the condition was thought to be incurable. This case, as well as that of Raymundus, contradicts the idea that physical and spiritual diagnoses, not to mention earthly and divine healing, were mutually exclusive. This does not

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[47] Gerard Cagnoli was a Franciscan friar in Pisa and in the 1340s a fellow friar, Bartolomeus Albizi, compiled a collection of his miracles.

[48] 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' p. 137: 'mittit pro medico ut incidatur, quia dictum est sibi quod erat de maledictis, unde difficile erat per naturam et artem ulterius posse curari.'

[49] See, for example, *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino, testis* XVI, p. 126; *testis* LXXXIV, p. 238, and *testis* C, p. 288.

[50] 'Accedentibus ergo medicis et illud insanabile malum curantibus per adustionem et incisuram, iste, meritis, Sancti Gerardi, nihil omnino sensit doloris et in tribus diebus fuit penitus liberatus.' 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' p. 137.

seem to hold true, not even in cases of demonic influence. Rather, what stands out here is the rather pragmatic approach to potential cures. David Gentilcore has also noted the similarity of possession and physical illnesses in vocabulary and means of cure; exorcistic formulae were used to conjure the physical disease out of the body in the early modern era. Disease, like demons, could be an active force attacking unexpectedly and then defeated. The reasons for and outcome of this process could remain inexplicable.[51]

Both Michael Goodich and Moshe Sluhovsky argue that physicians of the body were the first choice and only after their failure were other curative attempts tried, be they exorcism or invocation of a saint.[52] Hagiographic material is not necessarily the most reliable source when considering the sequence of curative efforts, as only the cases labelled as miraculous were recorded, hence divine aid was in this material always the last (and often the only) resort. Most likely, not all consultations with doctors were recorded, and those that were served first and foremost the needs of the genre: the doctors' failure increased the success of the saint. Hagiographic material does offer, however, a valuable insight into the intermingling of religion and medicine both in explaining and solving afflictions. As the cases of Yppolytus, Raymundus, who was cured by Saint Louis of Toulouse, and Franciscus, who was cured by Saint Laurent of Subiaco, show, patients could try various methods to obtain a cure at the same time and an undisputed aetiology or clear hierarchy of healing methods was not necessary. Furthermore, even if an earthly doctor was the first choice, saints were not necessarily rendered redundant. Their task was to offer spiritual comfort and operate in the field in which the emerging medicinal science was still helpless: killing pain.[53]

The same means of cure seem to have been available and tried for demoniacs as well as for other patients with mental disorders, which in turn testifies to the tolerance of the community and to non-marginalizing practices. Furthermore, the use of doctors does not support the arguments for universally recognized symptoms or a script followed by demoniacs. Rather, the negotiations, the pondering of various options, and the experimentation with several available cures point to mixed categories and the pragmatism of the participants. The different categorization of similar or even identical symptoms indicates the same. Only the most meticulous inquisitorial committees required clear and distinct categorization based on proof given by eye-witnesses between demonic possession and other

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[51]   David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 182.

[52]   Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 15; Goodich, 'Battling the Devil in Rural Europe,' p. 142. See, especially, McCleery 'Christ More Powerful than Galen?,' p. 128 for a plea for a more nuanced analysis of the role of religion and medicine in hagiographic sources.

[53]   In the field of religion pain and patient suffering were seen as meritorious, but medieval medicine did the best it could to relieve them; see Ester Cohen, *The Modulated Scream: Pain in Late Medieval Culture* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2010), pp. 87–112.

forms of mental disorder. Others, both clergy and laity, acknowledged that the diabolical logic could remain hidden and signs of demonic presence indeterminate.

Anger, Fear, Disgust: Emotional Responses

Miracle narrations are, by their very nature, emotive scripts: the chain of events proceeds from one emotional level to the next. Emotions were part of the proper ritual and part of the proper narration; these elements are often underlined in the depositions. Obviously, the demands of the hagiographic genre affected the way the affective elements were conceptualized, remembered, and recorded. The inquisitorial committee's questionnaire affected the details that come up, but narrations of previous miraculous cures may have shaped the way people gave meaning to their experiences.[54]

Genre, questionnaire, and the act of interrogation had an effect on the way emotive elements appear in the depositions. Initially, at the accident scene or by the sickbed, the need for divine aid was expressed by despair, anguish, and grief. Inner emotions could be expressed verbally, but desperation was typically conveyed in a ritualized manner by tears, the tearing of clothes and hair, and beating of the chest. Especially in cases of a sudden accident to a child or an accident in a public sphere with many spectators, ritualistic expressions of grief are recorded in the depositions.[55] Maternal grief for an accidentally killed child was typically displayed in this manner. Such ritual expressions manifested not only personal emotions but also social expectations. In the next stages, during the invocation and thanksgiving for the miracle, emotions were more readily expressed only in deeds and gestures.[56] A humble bearing was an essential element in both invoking a saint and in thanking for the miracle. Invocation rituals included the display of

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[54] Smoller, 'Miracle, Memory, and Meaning,' pp. 429–54 and Jussi Hanska, 'The Hanging of William Cragh: Anatomy of a Miracle,' *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001): 121–38.

[55] '…et matrem ipsius puelle et multos astantes plangere et flere circa eam commotis visceribus paternis dolens nimium planxit et flevit et quod dictus testis audiverat quod deus operaretur multa miracula pro dicto domino Thoma flexis ibidem genibus cum multis lacrimis et cum magna compunctione et devocione rogavit dictum sanctam Thomam…et omnes alii astantes qui poterant esse circa quadraginta inter mares et mulieres flexis genibus cum lacrimis rogaverunt pro resuscitatione dicte puelle.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 125r; '…et cum per dolore corruisset ad terram et esset quasi extra mentem suam posita,' ff. 202r–202v. '…dicta domina Blonda uxor eius incepit fortiter plorare et excapillare et pannos et maxillas delacerare,' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CXVII, p. 280; '…incepit fortiter plorare, stridere et sibi pannos et maxillas exquartare et delacerare,' *testis* CIII, p. 292. See also Anne Bailey, 'Lamentation Motifs in Medieval Hagiography,' in *Sex, Gender and the Sacred*, pp. 135–49 for 'lamentation' as a gendered cultural pattern in miracle stories.

[56] '…genuflexa invocavit et rogavit omnes astantes ut invocarent auxilium beati Nicholai,' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CIII, p. 292. On common kneeling, '…omnis astantes flexis genibus cum lacrimis et devote rogabant dictum sanctum Thomam.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 145r. '…alii qui tunc fuerunt presentes tam masculi quam femine flectentes nuda genua ad terram et elevantes oculos et manus ad celum devote cum lacrimis rogaverunt deum.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 139v; also f. 128r and f. 138r.

humility, and it was also expressed in many votive offerings: barefoot pilgrimages, fasting, and other penitential and ascetic acts offered to the saint.[57] After the grace was bestowed, joy, gratitude, and enhanced devotion were expected elements, a sign of a genuine miracle being the increase of devotion among the participants.[58] Emotions were thus crucial for the comprehension and experience of divine grace. Emotions in a miracle process were not passive states but demanded a committed performance from the participants. Producing them marked the crossing over from one state to the next in the process of becoming a beneficiary of (or a witness to) a miracle.

Affective elements were not restricted to the interaction with a heavenly intercessor; rather they were typical in all late medieval religiosity.[59] Senses, emotions, and imagination were crucial in spiritual experiences, and affective language was used in the various genres of devotional literature.[60] Given the significance of emotions in the religious culture of the era in general and in miracle narrations in particular, it is a little surprising, and noteworthy, to find that they are not emphasized elements in cases of mental disorder, at any stage of the 'miracle process.' Ritualistic expressions of emotions, like grief and sorrow or joy and gratitude, were not depicted in detail, unlike in many other types of miracle. Hidden in between the lines, however, less explicit emotional responses that fell outside the expectations of the genre can be found: anger, fear, and disgust were emotions demoniacs provoked in the surrounding communities because of their disruptive behaviour. Despite the commotion, people were, nevertheless, occasionally able to see behind the symptoms. The pain caused by the invading spirit

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[57] On the expression of emotions at the scene of a miracle and their interconnection with gender expectations, see Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 75–96; on votive offerings, pp. 161–230.

[58] For example, the questionnaire used in the Cantilupe process included the standard question about whether the witnesses became more devout after the miracle. They regularly replied yes, giving examples of more frequent prayers, pilgrimages, fasting, and attendance at masses. For example, the response of Alicia after the cure of her paralysed leg: 'Interrogata in quo est ipsa ratione dicti miraculi facta devocior. Respondit quod dicit in mane cum surgit Credo in Deum et quinques orationem domenicam et Ave Maria quod ante dictam curationem non faciebat. Ieiunat insuper sextis feriis et vivit de labore suo.' BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, f. 68r.

[59] Affective rhetoric emerged first in the writings of the Cistercians in the twelfth century and then spread to other orders as well as among the laity, and it can be seen as a prominent element in all literary genres from the thirteenth century on. The seminal author in the field is Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*. The scholarship on affective religiosity and feminine spirituality has been extensive in recent decades; see, for example, Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis*; Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Erika Lauren Lindgren, *Sensual Encounters: Monastic Women and Spirituality in Medieval Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); and Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[60] Spiritual understanding and the articulation of devotion were rooted in the identification with Christ in his humanity. Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (York: York University Press, 1999), p. 13. Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis*, p. 79. See also Eliana Corbari, *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 164–5.

to the victim also gave rise to sympathy in onlookers; compassion and pity were thus not unknown.

As noted above, alienation, even a sort of animalization expressed in aggression, is a recurrent feature in depositions about both the raving mad and the demoniac. In addition to hitting people and throwing things, biting seems to have been characteristic for demoniacs. Obviously, it may have been the last resort in self-defence for a frightened, possibly physically sick, and/or mentally disordered, tied-up person. But this violence, as well as well eating mud and stones, may also have been a method to underline the situation, to position these people outside the realms not only of proper conduct but also of human behaviour altogether, and liken them to brute animals. Linking someone with animal-like behaviour meant simultaneously linking them with dirt and impurity,[61] which was particularly apparent in the urge to devour filth. For example, her neighbours testified how during her affliction, the aforementioned Guillelmina put into her mouth mud, earth, and everything dirty she could gain access to.[62] Even if clear expressions of disgust are missing in the records, mention of animal-like behaviour implies revulsion may have been one way for the community to react. At its most extreme manifestation, demonic presence could break the boundaries of humanity altogether. Florence Chave-Mahir, in her study of high medieval exorcism practices, equates possession with a mask. At its most extreme, the transformed appearance created the utmost alterity, identifying the possessed with monsters; the demoniacs were no longer images of God but animal-like, savage, and diabolic.[63]

Some of the violations were, nevertheless, of a lesser degree. Surprising strength was often linked with both demoniacs and the raving mad, but most of all with possessed women. For example, according to the testimonies, *domina* Helena de Pille was hardly restrained by twelve persons,[64] Ventura by four,[65] and many other demoniacs by 'several people.'[66] Men who were out of their mind often acted violently, but uncontrollably aggressive men were more often seen as raving

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[61] Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*. See also Raiswell and Dendle, 'Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon and Early Modern England,' p. 754, who argue that some symptoms may have been exaggerated to serve didactic or propagandistic ends; they needed, however, to fit into the general discourse of possession.

[62] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLVIII–CLIX, pp. 215–16. Cf. Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum,* III, 8 for eating worms as a sign of insanity.

[63] On animalization and deformation, see Chave-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés*, pp. 186–94. In medieval iconography, the Devil was also often depicted as a savage beast. However, *furiosi* could also be linked with beasts since they lacked reason; this is more apparent in the judicial context, where rational capacity may have played a role in culpability; see Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 113. For a possessed nun barking like a dog, see Thomas of Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus*, II.57, p. 66.

[64] 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 234.

[65] 'Processus canonizationis B. Ambrosii Massani,' p. 575.

[66] Vatican City, BAV MS Vat. Lat. 1218, f. 203r; 'fighyola de anni XVI chiamata Pascharella che fo grandemente invexata dal dyabolo spiritata che alcuna volta eranto molti homini et non la possiano tenere.' Vatican City, BAV MS Vat. Lat. 7639, f. 189v, see also f. 163v. See also 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 883.

mad.[67] For example, Cicchus, the son of domina Fina, was gravely afflicted and violent, trying to bite anyone who got too close. He needed to be tied down, but he was defined as being raving mad (*adrabiacus*), not possessed.[68] The uncontrollable ferocity and strength of a demoniac may have been a narrative element in the didactic miracle narrations: an element intended to stress the malice of demons and the desperation of the situation. The 'unnaturalness' of the symptoms may have been the reason for resorting to a supernatural cause as an explanation.[69] Since it was a biological fact that men, in general, had more physical strength, even uncontrollable aggression on their part did not necessarily call for supernatural explanations. Even if uninhibitedly violent men caused acute physical danger to those close to them, on an ideological level aggressive female demoniacs may have posed a more serious threat to the peace and harmony of the community; uncontrollable aggression placed women more readily beyond the bounds of gendered ideals, potentially linking them with impurity and demons.

Aggression may have been to some extent accepted as an element of masculine identity, but uncontrollable ferocity was not. Restraint and self-control were elements aspired to particularly by people of higher status and particularly by men, while emotional outbursts and irrationality were, in dualist gender models, linked with femininity. For men, rationality was a goal they aspired to, and being clearly distinct from irrational animals was an important element in the masculinity of learned men above all.[70] The difference between status expectations and actual behaviour was strongly emphasized in the aforementioned case of Raymundus. He was an educated young man from a wealthy family, yet he was lying on the hard ground in a yard, tied up like a dog. He used to chew things that were thrown to him.[71] This disparity between ideals and reality may have been one of the

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[67] For example, Antonius Tronto saw demons trying to seize him, yet he was described as 'demens et rabidus.' He could hardly be held down by four men. 'Ad processum de vita et miraculis B. Petri de Luxemburgo,' CLXX, p. 506. Utterly violent men were, however, sometimes defined as demoniacs. 'Demoniacus quidam erat qui tanta furia vexabatur ut vix funibus posset teneri sed veniente furia omnia discerpebat.' 'Vita ac legenda beati Ioachimi Senensis ordinis Servorum Sanctae Mariae Virginis,' *Analecta bollandiana* XIII (1894): 383–97, here p. 389; also 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' *AASS* Sept II, pp. 442–74, here p. 450.

[68] 'et mordebat etiam omnibus personis sibi appropinquantibus,' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis CXXIX, p. 336.

[69] On the breaking of expected identity categories, see Alexandra Cuffel, 'The Matter of Others: Menstrual Blood and Uncontrolled Semen in Thirteenth-Century Kabbalists' Polemic against Christians, "Bad" Jews and Muslims,' in *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe: Gender, Power, Patronage and Authority in Latin Christendom*, ed. by Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 249–84. On gender transgressions as impurity, see Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*. Cf., however, 'Enquête pour la canonisation de saint Yves,' *testis* CXIII, pp. 180–1, for a young woman of twenty-two years acting violently and attacking her mother, but being diagnosed as *demens et furiosa*, not possessed.

[70] On this aspect of masculine identity, see Karras, *From Boys to Men*, pp. 66–108.

[71] 'et ipse testis frequenter visitabat eum et inveniebat eum in sua furia et iacentem in palea, quamquam alias esset filius divitis hominis, nec in hyeme quantumcumque gravi habebat aliud ad iacendum, nisi quod quandoque iactabatur sibi unus cotus et illum eciam cum manibus et dentibus disserpebat, ut dixit.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXVII, p. 223.

reasons for the widespread gossip and discussion; people considering him possessed rather than raving mad, even though a higher social background and male gender may, on a general level, have provided protection against such labels.[72]

The diagnosis between various conditions does not seem to have been the decisive element for the choice of care methods, but rather the symptoms. The intention may have been to punish deviant behaviour and even intentionally cause pain; sometimes demoniacs were whipped to make the demons' dwelling place as uncomfortable as possible,[73] but such examples are rare. The mother of Guillelmina, for example, explained that she hit her daughter with a thick stick to correct her behaviour.[74] In a sense, Splendosa, the mother, was not unreasonably violent and her aggression was not necessarily an emotional response. The use of physical force was a legitimate part of hierarchal relationships, such as between parents and children. It was a mark of privileged status in the social order. Correcting the behaviour of one's children, even by physical force, was not only parents' right; it was their responsibility. Splendosa only acted within the range of her maternal duties, even if she beat a girl of nine years.

The situation of Raymundus was even more miserable: he was bound in iron chains by his thumbs, arms, and feet; these chains were attached to a pole which was set firmly in the ground in the yard of his house.[75] It is specifically stated that the chains were of iron. Drawing attention to the misery of Raymundus may have been a narrative strategy on the part of Bertrandus Mostolli. He probably wanted to show starkly the desperate situation before the cure in order to authenticate the miraculous experience; only God could ameliorate the situation by turning the animal-like savage back into a rational and well-behaved young man. The use of iron chains is suggestive of the threat the victim was thought to pose, but this information was not regularly provided in the records; the examples are very rare, but iron chains seem to have been used only for men.[76] In the daily negotiations of care and cure, symptoms weighed more than diagnosis: the care any demoniac received was likely of a rough kind, but ferocious men, whether raving mad or possessed by a demon, were treated especially severely to prevent greater harm.

Binding was a typical method of taking care of both men and women out of their minds, regardless of the reason for the mental disturbance. Even if bystanders'

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[72] See also Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute* and Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 398–400. See, however, Levack, *The Devil Within*, p. 181, who claims that early modern demoniac men were typically from the higher social strata and/or well educated.

[73] Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 108.

[74] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLV–CLIX, pp. 214–16. See also *Processus canonizacionis beati Nicolai Lincopensis*, p. 366 for an adult possessed man who was guarded by people with sticks to prevent him from hurting himself and others.

[75] *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXVI, p. 221.

[76] 'et in compedibus ferreis pedum erat cathena in medio ligata.' *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae Sancti Ludovici*, cap. CLXVI, p. 221. BAV Vat. Lat. 4019, f. 79r: 'vincula ferrea quibus ligatus fuit,' ASV Arm. XVIII, 3328, f. 7r: 'a suis consanguneis funibus ligatus ad ferreis.'

fear may have played a role in this reaction, prevention was given as the justification for tying up: to prevent the mad and the possessed from harming themselves or others.[77] Such measures may also have been a practical matter; the victims' behaviour was uncontrollable; they were out of their minds and nobody could guard them constantly. There were few other options available for treating a violent person who posed a threat to their own well-being or that of family and friends. Other sources support these conclusions. Wendy J. Turner, in her study of the care and custody of the mentally ill in medieval England, argues that such persons were not abandoned, but abuse in their care was not uncommon. Family and relatives seem to have been the active parties in the supervision and guidance. The situation seems to have been similar in Tuscany where the family's role was decisive in the care of the mentally disordered, the quality of the care depending on the wealth of the family. Medieval England even had institutionalized mental health care, but in Tuscany such institutions were organized only during the early modern era.[78]

Violent and uncontrollable behaviour caused fear and anxiety in the surrounding society, and demonic presence could add an extra layer to the tribulation: a malign spirit was thought to dwell inside a family member or a neighbour. Its presence could contaminate others with impurity since it was believed that demons could exit their victims at will, and possibly enter another host nearby.[79] It is therefore surprising how rarely fear is made explicit in the depositions. Obviously, it is possible that fear was such an unavoidable and natural element in these cases that there was no need to mention it explicitly. It was not, however, an element that validated the affliction or recovery, and consequently it did not verify the miracle or its performer, therefore questions concerning it, or other emotions, were not added to the questionnaire. For the inquisitorial committee, it may have been irrelevant as it did not prove the case to be a genuine miracle. For the participants, the emotional responses may have been unpremeditated, spontaneous responses to a threatening situation, but since they were re-evoked in a narrative form much later, they must have had wider significance.

Concerning fear as a community response, the aforementioned recovery of Editha is highly relevant. Emma had known Editha from her childhood, and by the time of the incident she was a woman in her thirties. Twenty years later, at the

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[77]   For references to this custom in English court cases dealing with insane people, see Turner, *Care and Custody*, p. 134; see also Alexandra Pfau, 'Crimes of Passion: Emotion and Madness in French Remission Letters,' in *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom*, p. 106.

[78]   Turner, *Care and Custody*. For Tuscany, see Elizabeth W. Mellyn, *Mad Tuscans and Their Families: A History of Mental Disorder in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). Cf. Jenni Kuuliala 'Nobility, Community and Physical Impairment in Later Medieval Canonization Processes,' in *Infirmity in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Social and Cultural Approaches to Health, Weakness and Care*, ed. by Christian Krötzl, Katariina Mustakallio, and Jenni Kuuliala (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 67–82.

[79]   Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 108–9.

interrogation, she described Editha as *furiosa*, not possessed. Regardless of the long acquaintanceship with Editha and the absence of malign spirits in her reasoning, she had been terrified by Editha's behaviour. She told how she saw Editha in her madness, tied up and lying by the pulpit (*pulpitum*) in Hereford Cathedral. Emma was listening to the mass and sitting close to her. She had a front-row seat for Editha's cure; she saw how the bonds around Editha's hands were miraculously loosened up, an important detail in the miracle, and heard Editha explaining that Saint Thomas had appeared to her, curing her. Emma was frightened since she thought Editha was only saying these things because of her insanity. She expected Editha to attack her and run off: she had never been so terrified in her life before or after, she explained. She returned to her house and did not see Editha after that, nor did she care to see her, because of her terror.[80] Her fright was based on a very concrete element; seeing a madwoman without bonds, even if she was an old friend. Supernatural reasons, and fear of malign spirits or their actions, were not an indispensable prerequisite for such a reaction.

Suffering and physical pain were inherent in the narrations of demonic possession. Discomfort and physical suffering caused by the care methods are sometimes mentioned, and occasionally the exorcizing powers of the saints caused pain in the demon, expressed via the demoniac. More typically, pain was linked with the actions of the demon within the victim: the very phenomenon of possession was understood in forceful and violent terms, since demons invaded the body of their victim in a ferocious way. Victims were vexed, afflicted, or molested by demons.[81] The vocabulary, for instance *obsessio* or *raptus*/*rapta*, that was used to describe the phenomenon underlined its violent nature; *obsessio* implied besieging, trapping, or imprisoning, and *rapere* was also a word for rape.[82] Quite often terms like harassing, vexing, or possessing were used interchangeably, and a clear categorical difference between them cannot be deduced from the chosen corpus.[83]

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[80] 'reputans dictam Editham ex furore delirando proferre dicta verba et timens quod in eam irrueret concito gradu aufugiens fere descendendo per gradus per quos ascendebatur ad pulpitum precipitavit se ipsam quia numquam fuerat prius ita perterrita nec ex tunc fuit et recessit ad domum suam nec ex tunc vidit nec curavit videre eam per terrore predicto.' BAV Vat. Lat 4015, f. 218v.

[81] 'crudeliter afflicta,' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 118; see also pp. 121, 124, 130; 'fuit semper continue diu noctuque gravata & vexata,' 'Miracula S. Zitae a Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' p. 518; 'miserabiliter fuit vexata,' 'Ad processum de vita et miraculis B. Petri de Luxemburgo,' p. 506; 'vidit et interfuit quando torquebatur et affligebatur ab ispo demone,' 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' pp. 778–9 and p. 780: 'A daemone graviter molestabatur.'

[82] Elliott, 'The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality,' p. 161.

[83] The choice of exact vocabulary varied from one collection to another rather than from one case to another. For example, in the collection of miracles of Saint Zita vexing is equivalent to possession, not mere demonic harassment. Pasquese described her situation: 'quando vexabatur, habebat in corpore undecim daemones.' 'Miracula S. Zitae Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' p. 514. Correspondingly, Genovese Faber testified in the case of Laetitia in the same collection, saying the whole neighbourhood said Laetitia was vexed by demons and she saw her several times vexed and possessed. 'sic dicebatur per totam viciniam, quod vexabatur a daemonibus. Et dixit quod ipse multotiens videbat eam…plurimum vexatam et indaemoniatam,' p. 527. See also *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, 67, p. 468: 'erat demoniata, detenta ac vexata a demone per tres annos,' Also *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 118, 141–2, 273.

Suffering, both of the demon and the demoniac, emphasized the sanctity of the shrine and holiness of the patron,[84] which will be analysed in further detail in Chapter 5. Physical pain is also given as a telling symptom of demonic possession in the early modern era,[85] but medieval hagiographic material depicts a somewhat different image of the phenomenon. The miserable condition of the victim is noted, but physical pain as such is not regularly mentioned in the depositions, let alone stressed. Such elements are rarely found even in cases when the victims testify themselves after their recovery.[86] It seems to be the case, however, that direct reflections of personal pain, whether mental of physical, do not stand out as a crucial element in depositions of any kind of miracle. Pain was often included in the depositions, but not emphasized.[87] It did not necessarily play any role in evidence testifying to the miraculous powers of the saint in question. Probably, aches and even pain were such ordinary parts of daily life that they did not in themselves arouse interest or form important evidence for a miracle; hence such elements were omitted or recorded only sporadically in canonization processes. On the other hand, pain is an inner sensation; it is hard to prove convincingly its existence for anybody else, especially after the tribulation.[88] The difficulty of describing physical pain and the lack of appropriate vocabulary may have been yet another reason for its neglect.

The status, age, and gender of the victim likely had an effect on the bystanders' emotional responses. For example, Petrus Johannis from Linköping diocese in Sweden was possessed at the beginning of the fifteenth century; he tried to throw himself into water and fire. His condition did not, apparently, arouse much sympathy. Rather, he was guarded by people with sticks and whips and tied up. The reason for this was that he was a robust adult man and extremely violent: he had tried to kill his wife and mother and had nearly broken the arm of a matron,

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[84]   Ester Cohen, 'Sacred, Secular, and Impure: The Contextuality of Sensations,' in *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: New Essays*, ed. by Lawrence Besserman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 123–33, esp. p. 126.

[85]   Levack, *The Devil Within*, pp. 6–8. See also Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims*, for mental and physical tribulations caused by demons. Even if these tribulations form a major part of Ermine's religious experiences, the sensations of pain are not specified in the text describing her life.

[86]   'erat adeo fracta et concussa præ nimia fatigatione, quod vix poterat se aliquo modo erigere propter ossium dolorem quem sentiebat.' 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 876 and 'Licet multum doleret sibi ossa et caro,' pp. 882–3. Cf. 'In sanatione sensit magnam rabiem & dolorem,' 'Miracula B. Henrici Baucenensis,' *AASS* Jun. II, pp. 376–91, here p. 385.

[87]   Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Integration*, pp. 60–3, 264–73. See also Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*, pp. 32–42.

[88]   The difficulty, if not impossibility, of verbally expressing physical pain, one's own or others,' even in the modern world is one of the main arguments of Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). For the lack of emotions in autobiographical texts concerning disability, Bianca Frohne, 'Performing Dis/ability? Constructions of "Infirmity" in Late Medieval and Early Modern Life Writing,' in *Infirmity in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, pp. 51–66.

who escaped only after a local cleric managed to set her free.[89] However, when an unnamed girl in Perugia became afflicted on the bank of the river Tiber, she suffered from demonic invasion, fell to the ground, and tried to throw herself into water and fire. People who saw her were moved by great compassion (*compassione maxima movebantur*) because of her misery.[90] Obviously, both victims violated communal expectations in their conduct, but the results were different. Petrus Johannis was marginalized, but the unnamed daughter of *domina* Clara remained a focus of attention; she was ill for more than a year and doctors were consulted for her recovery, but in vain. She was cured after her mother made a vow to Saint Giles of Assisi.

As demoniacs came from all walks of life and manifested variable symptoms, the responses to their afflictions also varied. The most typical emotional responses pertinent to the genre, and which served to structure the miracle narration, were not emphasized in these cases. Nevertheless, emotional responses were a way for the community to react. On a communal level, emotions, such as anger and disgust, may have been collectively produced and intensified. Emotional responses served in helping people to get a grip on the situation, facilitated the diagnosis, and justified the occasionally harsh methods of care. They signified and produced alterity by marking out both the disruptive behaviour and the deviant individual. However, the victims were not only seen as a disruptive presence: references to compassion indicate an ability to feel empathy for them. Thus demoniacs were not inevitably ostracized. Even if emotional responses do not stand out in the depositions, they were important for the comprehension of demonic possession in that they increased communal coherence and underscored proper order.

Marginalization and Integration

Demoniacs jeopardized many of the principal values of their communities, such as social peace and harmony. Possession was a matter not only of personal alienation but also of disruption of the social order. Social control included bodily control and demoniacs with their atrocious symptoms displayed a lack of it. The social consequences, such as turmoil and discord, stand out in the descriptions of symptoms. Quite often demoniacs were depicted as a nuisance, causing irritation in the neighbourhood. This kind of approach can be found, for example, in the case of Bonaventura in the canonization process of John Buoni. One of her symptoms was, as she recounted, that she could not enter a church or confess

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[89] *Processus canonizacionis beati Nicolai Lincopensis*, p. 366.
[90] 'Non solum noti, sed et ignoti…videndo at audiendo puellam compassione maxima movebatur. Nam in terram cadebat et os retrosum tenebat et diabolum se videre dicebat et in aquam et in ignem se projicere cupiebat.' 'De signis & miraculis, quæ Dominus ostendit per B. Fratrem Ægidium,' p. 245.

her sins. This was not a clear enough indication for the commissioners, though. They explicitly asked how she knew she was possessed by a demon and was not suffering from just an ordinary infirmity. She explained the reason was the attitude of others; people often asked her: what is this you are doing, why do you say these things? And people were very afraid of her, she added. Bonaventura's memories were muddled, so she was not well aware of all her symptoms, or of when her torment had started. Her symptoms were public knowledge and visible and people called her *demoniaca*.[91]

The canonization process of John Buoni was carried out in the 1250s. As is typical of Italian hagiography, it contains a number of vivid cases of demonic possession. Contrary to many other Italian canonization processes or less official miracle collections, the commissioners did not accept the categorization of a case as a demonic possession at face value. The witnesses were regularly asked the same question as Bonaventura: how did you know it was a possession? Repeatedly, a similar answer was given: because the victim had all the signs of a demoniac.[92] Many of the witnesses continued that the possessed could not enter a church or hear the word of God. It remains unknown whether these are the above-mentioned typical signs, or extra proof in the case. It is also possible that 'hearing the word of God' was linked to attempted exorcism rituals. The commissioners did not further investigate these claims or categorizations.

These cases would appear to confirm Brian P. Levack's argument: in this context, there seems to have been a certain well-known pattern for demonic possession. The participants knew, recognized, and accepted collectively general signs. This cannot be more widely applied to other situations, though. As the majority of aforementioned cases demonstrate, there was no broad consensus about the signs of possession; rather they were disputed and uncertain. Symptoms and especially their interpretation were context-bound and demonic powers were comprehended and used as an explanatory element in lived experiences in various ways. Furthermore, in a judicial hearing, 'all the signs of a demoniac' were not enough by themselves for a solid categorization. The depositions offer yet another verifying detail: common opinion confirmed the diagnosis.[93] Communal negotiations were important in the judicial context, since the *fama publica* of an event or a person was a prerequisite for *inquisitio*-type hearings; it was also socially acceptable as evidence, since it was something that everybody knew about.[94]

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[91] 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 876.

[92] 'Quod habebat omnia signa demoniacae.' 'videbat in eam omnia demoniaca signa.' 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 767 and p. 883.

[93] 'et quod publica vox et fama est et fuit quod de hoc quod dicta Benghipace ita erat arrepta a demonio'; 'et quia de hoc publica vox et fama fuit inter gentes et est hodie'; 'immo gentes appelabant eam demoniacam,' 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 883 and p. 876.

[94] On public fame in constructing sainthood, see Christian Krötzl, '*Fama sanctitatis*. Die Akten der spätmittelalterlichen Kanonisationsprozesse als Quelle zu Kommunikation und Informationsvermittlung in der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft,' in *Procès de canonisation*, pp. 223–43. See also Thelma S. Fenster

Meliorinus was Bonaventura's neighbour during the affliction, but at the time of the interrogation they were married, which constituted a clear sign of her integration back into society. Meliorinus stated that the demon made Bonaventura say many crude words (*rusticitates*) about God and the saints. Furthermore, the demon prohibited her from entering church and confessing her sins. According to Meliorinus, Bonaventura was amazing and terrifying to look at while she was having seizures (*miraculosa et terribilis res erat ad videndum*). More than fear or amazement, suffering and compassion emerge from Meliorinus' statement; he saw Bonaventura suffering and he suffered with her.[95]

Foolish and abusive words could make an occurrence particularly public, as insults could easily lead to other sorts of communal provocation and conflict, inciting further disorder. Slanders and insults were often recorded as being uttered by women demoniacs.[96] Neighbourliness, that is maintenance of solidarity and reduction of discord, was an essential value in tight-knit communities. The ideal good neighbourhood was characterized by peacefulness, avoidance of strife, and encouragement of amity. Annabel Gregory, in her study of witchcraft accusations in seventeenth-century Rye, argues that failing to be 'a good neighbour,' by quarrelling and stirring up trouble among neighbours, could bring about accusations of witchcraft, since they were one means of expressing emotions and acting in such conflicts.[97] It is worth considering whether labelling a person's behaviour as being caused by demons was a similar kind of conflict resolution method. Was the intention to suppress and punish undesirable conduct?

The case of Bellanoma offers a point of departure for examining these issues. In Mantua, Italy, on 1 August 1251 she stepped in front of an inquisitorial committee and testified to her affliction and subsequent delivery. Eight years earlier, Bellanoma explained, she was vexed by impure spirits. A few months before the interrogation, after the feast of the Ascension, she was taken by her neighbours by force, as she added, to the shrine of John Buoni, where she was cured. Both men and women from the neighbourhood were behind this forced pilgrimage.[98] An invocation is not mentioned in the depositions; the pilgrimage and being present at the shrine were enough for the cure and for giving sound evidence of the miracle in the hearing. Since the neighbours had taken the initiative, and had done so apparently against the wishes of the victim herself, Bellanoma's symptoms must have been

and Daniel Lord Smail, eds., *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[95] 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 876.

[96] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CCII, p. 445; *testis* CVIII, p. 303. 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' p. 450.

[97] Gregory, 'Witchcraft, Politics and "Good Neighbourhood",' pp. 31–66. Cf. Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender*, p. 126 *et passim*.

[98] The witnesses to the case are Bellanoma herself and two women neighbours. 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' pp. 799–800.

disturbing for the daily life of the community. However, when compared to many other cases, her symptoms seem to have been rather mild. She had seizures when she heard people speaking about God. Francia, a woman neighbour, testified that she had often seen Bellanoma twist and turn when God was mentioned. Francia used to sign Bellanoma in the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost, and John Buoni. This did not improve her condition, though—quite the contrary: Bellanoma tried to assault her neighbour after such benedictions.

In Bellanoma's case some of the co-pilgrims, namely *domina* Francia and *domina* Giselberta, testified with her. Francia had only detected the signs of possession three years earlier, while Giselberta had known that something was amiss only for a year, since she had not lived in the quarter longer than that. Apparently, Bellanoma's symptoms were not so disturbing that they had attracted attention sooner, since she herself argued that the possession had lasted for eight years. Three years is, however, a long time to put up with a disturbing neighbour, but no earlier measures to improve the situation were mentioned in the depositions. All the witnesses admitted that Bellanoma was taken to the shrine by force. Invocation rituals and forced pilgrimages may have been a way to strengthen or restore the community's hierarchies, but they were not necessarily an immediate response to undesirable behaviour. Demonic possession was sometimes a rather sudden, unexpected, and unexplainable trauma, which was also resolved swiftly, but there are a large number of cases that were very different. Years or even decades of possession before an attempted (recorded) cure were not an anomaly, particularly in Italian cases. For example, Laetitia, wife of Angiorelli, had been vexed for thirty years, Migliore thirteen, Richa eleven, and Madonnina thirty-three.[99]

Long-lasting symptoms argue for a rather tolerant approach on the part of the community. Indeed, the intervention of the community must have been preceded by a considerable amount of negotiation about what was wrong, how to put the situation right, where to search for a cure, which saint to turn to, and who should take the initiative. The diagnosis of possession was always a result of communal discussion. When a cure was sought collectively, the method was also the result of communal decision-making. Interestingly, after causing so much trouble, shouting, cursing, and aggression, the demoniacs were nonetheless tolerated in their communities, as the length of some of the afflictions testifies. Victims were not

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[99] '*Miracula S. Zitae a Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta*,' Apr. II, pp. 518–27. For other examples, see 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' pp. 211–41, e.g. a certain Helena who had been possessed for fourteen years; *domina* de Pilla twelve, and several unnamed women for five or more years. 'Miracula B. Henrici Baucenensis,' p. 385 for Berta testifying that she had been possessed for nine years and the register of miracles of Michele Pesaro, where Maria testified that she had been possessed for twelve years. 'Le livre des miracles,' pp. 214–17. 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' p. 450, for Antonius Sclavus having been possessed for nine years. 'Apographum processus informationis circa vitam, mortem, translationem et miracula B. Odonis,' *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882): 323–54, here pp. 330–1; for the cure of Maria after eighteen years of possession. See also Pellegrini, 'Testifying to Miracles,' p. 124 for Iacoba's and Colia's recoveries after an intervention of Saint Bernardino of Siena after thirty and eighteen years of possession, respectively.

abandoned by their families or left alone in their misery with their demons. Quite often remedies for their infirmity were sought collectively; a typical procedure was that family, friends, and neighbours took the demoniac to the shrine of a local intercessor. This could be done forcibly, as in the case of Bellanoma, but not all these performances were violent or coercive. In addition to, or even instead of, being a form of subjugation and enforcement of communal hierarchies, they may have been a form of communal caregiving. This was obviously a harsh kind of care, but it may also have been the only kind available. Pilgrimages required a considerable amount of time and effort from the participants. Rather than a punishment, a joint pilgrimage was a collective investment made for the harmony of the community. This points in the same direction as the long-lasting symptoms of many, particularly Italian, demoniacs. Cases of demonic possession were not only narratives of enforced hierarchies and subjugation, but also of toleration and integration.

Once the decision to take Bellanoma to the shrine of John Buoni was made, she was not left there alone. Bellanoma recovered in the evening when she vomited the impure spirits out of her body. The aforementioned Francia stayed the night at the shrine with Bellanoma and in the morning they attended mass together. Bellanoma also received the Eucharist, a symbol of her integration back into society as a full member. In many cases demonic possession was a way to explain the otherwise unexplainable and put the blame outside the person herself. As the reason for the turmoil was not the person him- or herself but an outer force, it was also possible to regain harmony within the household and community once the symptoms stopped.[100] It was not necessary to get rid of the person, but rather the disturbing malign force by successful invocation. The logic is not far from that found in judicial problem-solving in remission letters, where the crime was depicted as a singular occurrence and the criminal as being otherwise of good reputation. As Alexandra Pfau examines, 'the speech act of the remission proclaimed that it erased the crime and restored the criminal to his or her "good reputation"' in both the judicial and social sense of the word, and simultaneously restored order and harmony in the community.[101] In court cases the Devil or demons were rarely blamed or used as an explanation in attempts at exculpation.[102]

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[100] See also Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 28 and Cam. Grey, 'Demoniacs, Dissident, and Disempowerment in the Late Roman West,' *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13:1 (2005): 39–69, here p. 58.

[101] See Pfau, 'Crimes of Passion,' pp. 104–5 for this logic in French remission letters. The insane were often, with some reservations, seen as not being responsible for the crimes they may have committed. Turner, *Care and Custody*, pp. 129–32.

[102] According to Claude Gauvard (*De grace especial*, p. 441), in letters of remission in medieval France the Devil was mentioned mainly if it was impossible to blame the victim for the crime, like in thefts, abortions, and cases of blasphemy. Only in 2 per cent of homicide cases was this kind of rhetoric used. Sara M. Butler, after studying eyre rolls and coroner's rolls from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England, has come to the conclusion that the Devil was blamed only in 0.8 per cent of insanity cases. Butler, 'Representing the Middle Ages,' pp. 122–3.

Social tension was a result of demonic possession, but it is hard to say at which point in the disturbance a collective diagnosis was made. The evidence does not support the idea that previous personal conflict was a motivation for accusing someone of being a demoniac, as happened in witchcraft accusations. For the participants, seeking a cure and ending the discordant behaviour seems to have been the main goal. However, as the interrogations were carried out *after* the affliction was over, the nature of canonization processes has undoubtedly affected the rather lenient tone in describing the cases. At the moment of interrogation, the victims were no longer demoniacs. The affliction and the cure were seen in retrospect. This time gap could have been only a couple of hours, as in the case of Migliorata, who recovered at the shrine of Saint Zita during the very day the case was recorded, or a couple of months as in the cases of Bellanoma and Bonaventura. Sometimes the possession and subsequent miraculous recovery took place years or even decades before the interrogation, as in Editha's case.

Demonic possession was clearly a marginal state, but it was not a form of permanent exclusion. Little is known about the victims after their tribulations, but the little that is known indicates a potential for reintegration. Guillelmina, a maiden of nineteen years, was respectable enough to be interrogated in a hearing herself. Bellanoma did not only testify herself but also got married after her tribulation. Similarly, the actions of *domina* Clara, the mother of the unnamed possessed girl in Perugia by the river Tiber, point in the same direction. In her vow, *domina* Clara gave a promise of a rather typical counter-gift: she promised to take her daughter to the shrine with a candle and circle the shrine with a line of wax. In Italy, it was a particularly feminine duty to take care of children, and invoking a saint for their recovery was one means of discharging that obligation. Furthermore, after a miracle daughters, more often than sons, were taken to a shrine as a sign of gratitude. A joint pilgrimage was, in addition to being a devotional act, also a method of socializing children for their future roles. For girls, this meant preparing them for their future nurturing role.[103] Apparently, spirit possession was not a reason to abandon these future hopes and responsibilities, which in turn demonstrates that this girl was not permanently marginalized because of her affliction.

Conclusions

The Church's teachings and theological thinking about demonic powers were a universalizing discourse, but in addition, local culture and tradition as well as

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[103]   Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Learning by Doing: Pilgrimages as a Means of Socialisation in the Late Middle Ages,' in *Agents and Objects: Children in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. by Katariina Mustakallio and Jussi Hanska (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2015), pp. 133–46.

individual statements and the conceptions of both commissioners and witnesses formed the amalgam of the canonization records. Various practices, discourses, and definitions are present in this material despite its shared background in theology and canon law. Therefore, a single discourse or one all-encompassing definition of demonic powers cannot be deduced from this material. Rather, the evidence indicates that there did not even exist *a* dividing line between demonic possession and raving madness or other forms of insanity. The symptoms of possession and methods of categorization varied. Each canonization process and collection of miracles formed a context of its own, a context within which the motivation, reasoning, and methods of categorization were shaped.

Demonic possession was not an automatic label used for all deviant behaviour. One part of the community's response was the shared negotiations about the condition. The pragmatism of the communal response is highlighted by the way the laity could also try earthly medicine and doctors, even if a spiritual reason for the affliction seemed plausible. The mixed categories are also reflected in the attitudes of the inquisitorial committees. In Italian material, whether an official canonization process, local hearing, or register collected at a shrine, there were many cases of demonic possession, and their categorization was rather liberal, no indisputable evidence being required to categorize a case as possession. On some occasions, as in the hearing of Charles of Blois, the decision to label a case as demonic possession seems to have been made by the inquisitorial committee. At the other end of the spectrum are hearings under strict clerical control, particularly the Cantilupe process, where cases were scrutinized with care and witnesses' suggestions of demonic presence were not accepted without further proof.

Obedience towards earthly but particularly towards heavenly hierarchies was an essential element of proper conduct and social order. The behaviour of demoniacs both manifested and disrupted them. The social consequences, general disorder, noise, inappropriate conduct, and aggression seem to have alarmed the community most. Emotional responses not only underlined the alterity of the possessed but also showed a potential for empathy. They, as well as the long duration of an affliction and joint efforts to find a cure, testify to the community's tolerance.

Family members and neighbours had few choices but to put up with the deviant and infirm individual despite the trouble she or he may have caused. In the community's social dynamics, demonic possession was not a way to act out previous personal conflict; to marginalize or drive a competitor or a foe out of the community. Being possessed was a marginal state and memories of demoniacs' conduct lived on in the community, otherwise the witnesses would not have been able to testify in the case. It seems, however, that it was not a permanent stigma; the demoniacs' alterity was of a temporary kind and could be resolved. Reintegration into society was possible. At the time of the interrogation and recording of the case, they were no longer demoniacs, but *miraculés*, beneficiaries of divine grace.

These moments of disruption reveal, however, the frames of proper order and of social and spiritual hierarchies. On the communal level, the marking out of deviance and the negotiating of its meaning served as a method to generate coherence and produce proper order. Demoniacs reinforced the understanding of 'us' as God-fearing, devout, and prudent Christians by manifesting its unwanted and deviant alternative. As miracles are by their very nature narratives of hope and redemption, demoniacs ultimately embodied the divine grace, peace, and harmony bestowed upon the community and not demonic malice, chaos, and disorder.

5

Constructing the Sacred

Demons, Priests, and Pilgrims

A major response on both communal and personal levels to demonic possession was obviously the search for a cure which would drive out the malign force and restore normality. As possession was a spiritual state, the remedy also needed to be spiritual. To resolve the situation, the participants needed to plead with a saint for help, promise a counter-gift, and embark on a pilgrimage to the saint's shrine. By doing this, the participants were simultaneously affirming the sanctity of a local patron and the sacredness of the shrine; they were contributing to the construction of the sacred. This was not just a by-product but one of the major aims of the participants. The sacred and the diabolical, God and the Devil, were binary forces but, for that reason, they were inherently intertwined. The opposition of good and evil manifested itself concretely in demoniacs, who were both agents and objects in this interaction.

As Chapters 2–4 have demonstrated, demonic presence was confirmed and created by communal negotiation; the same holds true for the sacred. The sacred, as a physical place, socially constructed space, or concept, was not stable or fixed but required (re-)construction and repeated negotiation. This was a multifaceted process involving behavioural expectations as well as sensory and emotional experiences and responses.[1] The different signs, gestures, and rituals of the various participants were essential in reinforcing the sacredness of a space and even a prerequisite for its construction; the sacred was not only a product of elite domination.[2]

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[1] On opposite elements (and their instability) in constructing the sacred, Tobias Döring, 'Introduction,' in *Performances of the Sacred in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. by Susanne Rupp and Tobias Döring (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 7–11. On the evolution of the concept 'sacred' in Western tradition, see Lawrence Besserman, 'Introduction: Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: Issues and Approaches,' in *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Lawrence Besserman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1–15; Dawn Marie Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe, 1100–1389* (New York: Routledge, 2003); for definition of sacred space, see pp. 2–24; for profane uses of sacred space, pp. 53–70. On fluidity and porous boundaries between sacred and secular, Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, 'Defining the Holy: Delineation of Sacred Space,' in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 1–26.
[2] On various meanings and uses of the sacred, see Döring, 'Introduction;' Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Lawrence Besserman, ed., *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*; Paul Trio and Marjan De Smet, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Sacred Places in Late Medieval Towns* (Leuven: Leuven

All the participating groups, namely demons, their victims, co-pilgrims, and the clergy, were needed in constructing and validating the interaction between the diabolical and the sacred and its positive outcome: the re-creation of the sacred and affirmation of cosmological hierarchy. In this nexus, the speech of demons was pivotal: it identified the active agents, the tormenting spirits, as well as the intercessor begetting liberation. It was important on a general cultural level: while manifesting the powers of malign spirits, the speaking demons also affirmed the superior powers of saints and God. In the chosen corpus, demonic speech is more prominent in didactic miracle collections. The victims and other lay participants could also claim an active role in the identifying process by naming the tormentors. It was a method to render the situation more comprehensible and an attempt to control it, and hence an important community response to the situation. The comparison between lay and clerical perspectives forms an important part of this chapter since demonic speech and names reveal a cleavage between their modes of thought.

In the construction of the sacred, ritual participation was essential. It was a constitutive element in all miracles, and deliveries from demonic possession were no exception. Various rituals performed at the sacred space empowered the local clergy, but ritual participation also enabled pilgrims and sometimes even the demoniacs to take the initiative and take charge of the chain of events. Rituals were a form of symbolic communication and important for social dynamics as pilgrimages were joint efforts. Clergy and the co-pilgrims often controlled the curative methods. The victims themselves were typically out of their minds and incapacitated by the care-giving methods, such as tying up. The demoniacs could, nonetheless, claim agency in the process by stressing their bodily signs and gestures at the delivery. Even sensory elements at the exit of the spirit created and affirmed the power of the sacred.

Speaking the Devil: Speaking the Saint

Shouting, insulting, cursing, and blaspheming were among the daily troubles the demoniacs caused in their communities. This alarmed the community and facilitated the diagnosis. Such symptoms are only mentioned in passing; they are not exemplified in the form of direct quotations or systematically scrutinized by the inquisitorial committee. Not all demonic speech was silenced in the records,

though. On some occasions, the words uttered by the demon via the demoniac were evidently a crucial element in the narration; they could form firm evidence for the miracle.

For example, a certain Helena de Pille in Siena was possessed by a demon and the affliction lasted for fourteen years. She was eventually cured at the shrine of Saint Ambrose of Siena in 1287. During the first seven years her torments were not visible to others, but during the last seven her vexation was obvious to everybody: Helena tore her clothes, scratched her face, and pulled her hair. She could hardly be held still by twelve persons. This case was recorded in a register at the shrine and confirmed by witnesses; many dignified ladies testified to Helena's possession and recovery. A significant detail, the words of the demoniac, helped in the categorization. When interrogated about the source of the infirmity, the demon inside Helena replied that he was one of Lucifer's angels that had been driven out of heaven. The malign spirit was further interrogated as to his intentions: for how long was he going to invade the poor woman? The demon did not respond, but his victim raised three fingers. Three years? was the next question. No, was the reply. Three weeks? No. Three days? Yes. The third day the demon started to shout, yelling: 'I can't remain here any longer since Saint Ambrose is driving me out.' The demoniac was rushed to the shrine of Saint Ambrose, where she was cured.[3]

Similarly, a demon inside a young girl, the daughter of Rolandus de Reza, claimed that Raymondinus ought to expel him. The bystanders needed to verify the remedy and asked where this Raymondinus was. The saint meant by the demon was Raymond of Piacenza (Raymundus Palmarii), and the girl was taken to his shrine and cured. The journey was not easy, however, since the demoniac exhausted her co-pilgrims, and the demon inside continued his offences, crying, 'Raymondinus, may you have bad fortune.' But once at the shrine the affliction stopped immediately because of the intercession of the said Raymond.[4] The utterances of the demon were a curious mix of certainty about the saint's powers of exorcism and the malice of the demon in the form of an insult. 'Raymundinus' was a diminutive version of the saint's name. In another similar case, the demoniacs called out for Saint Clare of Montefalco, mocking her as 'Chiaruccia, Chiaruccia,'[5]

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[3] 'haec omnia predicta vera esse plures fide dignae dominae iuraverunt.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 236.

[4] 'filia quondam Rolandi de Reza […] Quæ cum vexaretur, sicut confessa est ipsa puella, dixit dæmon, se non inde egressurum, nisi per Raymondinum, sic dicens: Raymondinus me debet expellere, Raymondinus me debet expellere. Interrogatus dæmon, ubi esset iste Raymondinus; respondit: Placentiæ. Quo cum dæmoniaca duceretur prædicta, ipse dæmon eam vexando, ductores plurimum turbavit in via, ipsos valde fatigando, & sic etiam sæpe dicendo: Raymondine, malam fortunam habeas!' 'Miracula Sancti Raymundi Palmarii confessoris,' in *AASS*, Iul. VI, pp. 658–63, here pp. 658–9.

[5] *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, *testis* CCXXIII, p. 500. Also 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237: 'Tunc ille cœpit clamare: Ambrosine, Ambrosine,' and 'Ambrosi, Ambrosi, quid mihi facturus es?,' 'Vita de B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 199.

which was clearly a pejorative variant of the name Chiara. The demeaning nicknames were a verbal form of combat: by belittling these saints, their position, and their power, the demons were simultaneously asserting that Raymond and Clare were saints with the power to expel them.

Demons could also engage in more sophisticated verbal battles. Since demons had once been angels and were spiritual creatures, they were superior to men in power and understanding. They had greater knowledge of religious matters, along with gifts of prophesy, clairvoyance, and speaking in tongues. A calm, rational, and knowledgeable demoniac who made prophecies was a widespread topos in didactic literature.[6] In didactic exempla, demoniacs could even preach the word of God, since it was a greater sin to do bad when one knew the right path than to sin solely out of ignorance. Furthermore, there is a topos found in educational material where a demon reveals via the demoniac the hidden sins of bystanders. Such cases multiplied at the beginning of thirteenth century in the wake of the Fourth Lateran Council. The intention was to promote the newly regulated annual confession of sins. The core message of these exempla was that demons knew of all the bad deeds of Christians, but the confession of sins washed them away. After confession, the demons were ignorant of any sins committed; the former sinner was now good and pure.[7] Demons were an active tool in the propaganda of moralists; they could prophesy, preach, and be asked about spiritual matters, and people listened to their words, even, apparently, trusting the words of the 'Father of lies.'[8] Didactic material stressed the importance of the interconnection between the two extremes of spiritual forces and the significance of demonic speech in the affirmation of the power of the sacraments.

Preaching demoniacs were not only a literary theme but also known historical figures. According to Barbara Newman, possession could have been knowingly used by women to gain respect and wider opportunities in the field of religion. Nancy Caciola, on the other hand, argues that these women considered themselves to be possessed by the spirit of God. Demonic possession was an interpretation made by the community, which saw the religious practices of these women in a negative light.[9] These women considered themselves inspired by and occupied by the divine spirit, but they were increasingly suspected of being possessed by malign spirits. Obviously, the inspiration of the divine spirit and demonic possession

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6   The knowledge of secret things was a sign of demonic possession. 'Cœpit autem quædam secreta loqui, quæ scire non poterat homo simplex.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237.

7   'Quid enim mali locutus sum de filia tua. Bona est et munda; nihil de ea mali vel novi vel dixi.' Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum,* III, 6. The whole disstinctio tertia, 'De confessione,' is filled with similar cases of demons revealing the sins and confessions rescuing the Christians from spiritual damnation or social shame.

8   John 8:44; see also Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, III, 6.

9   Newman, 'Possessed by the Spirit,' pp. 753–62; Caciola, 'Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession,' pp. 268–306.

were not interchangeable or corresponding phenomena—quite the opposite—yet the signs and symptoms of a demoniac and of an ecstatic mystic, such as convulsions, visions, and cries, could have been confusingly similar. The discernment of spirits became an increasingly heated topic at the end of the Middle Ages.[10] These learned speculations about female mystics' source of inspiration were, however, remote from the daily troubles the demoniacs caused in their communities, but perception of demonic presence and its connection to the sacred were fundamental for the laity, too.

Demonic speech with its connection to superior knowledge was a recurrent theme in later medieval culture. Demons were, for example, a regular feature in medieval drama. In this context, the voice of the demoniac disrupted proper order by what was said and how it was said, as Andreea Marculescu notes; demoniacs did not possess a stable identity, and thus could not articulate interpretable speech. When the words were recorded in a miracle narration, it was the speech of the demon, not the 'voice' of the demoniac, that was discernible. In a sense the voice of the demoniac was not deliberately meaningful; on occasion it had become animal-like howling, while the meaningful *vox distincta* belonged to the demon inside.[11] Unlike the possessed in drama, what the demons said via the possessed in a miracle narration did not disrupt proper order, but rather confirmed it by demonstrating the exorcizing powers of saints. Unlike the demoniacs, the malign spirit had a fixed identity, and his words were understandable and sometimes important in constructing divine grace in a miracle narration.

The literary models of preaching demons had an effect on how demonic possession was negotiated in daily life. They were not only an element in moral teaching, but also an element in the construction and evaluation of sainthood. Communication and a form of negotiation with the invading spirit is much emphasized in some, mainly Italian, miracle collections. The demonic utterances could have been provocations, as in the case of Chiaruccia, but the invading spirit was sometimes deliberately questioned in order to identify him. On occasion, questioning the possessing spirit was an important constituent of the interaction between the diabolical and the sacred. It also enabled the clergy to enhance their position in the ritual of delivery. In hagiographic material, exorcism was a divine grace working through relics, the clergy having only an intermediary role,

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[10] Major contributions in this field are Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*; Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman*; Elliott, *The Bride of Christ*; Dinzelbacher, *Heilige oder Hexen*; and Kieckhefer, 'The Holy and the Unholy,' pp. 310–37, who also argues (p. 318) that the ambivalence of society could be internalized and the doubt regarding the nature of the inspiration could have been real in the minds of the people in question.

[11] For demoniacs' 'voice' and demons' speech in late medieval drama, see Andreea Marculescu, 'The Voice of the Possessed in Late Medieval French Theater,' in *Voice and Voicelessness in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Irit Kleiman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 139–52. See also Sarah Kay, 'The Soundscape of Troubadour Lyric, or, How Human Is Song?,' 'Sound Matters,' ed. by Susan Boynton, Sarah Kay, Alison Cornish, and Andrew Albin, *Speculum* 91:4 (2016): 998–1039, esp. pp. 1005–6.

but sometimes this role was presented as crucial. Adjurations of the spirit and the sprinkling of holy water were among the rituals performed by the clergy;[12] hagiographic material does not depict any official exorcism rituals. The malign spirits were interrogated; indeed, they were even asked to tell the signs manifesting delivery, and these were later verified in the narration, as is exemplified in the aforementioned case of Helena de Pille.

The questioning of the invading spirit may have been part of the curative rituals or attempts to cure, even if it does not feature regularly in the depositions. In the canonization process of John Buoni, Brother Jacobus, a lay member of Augustinian hermits, recounts the case of Guerula, who was possessed at a well. She was taken to a church, where the priest came and asked her: 'Who should drive you out?' (*Quis debet te expellere*); the demon responded: 'John Buoni.'[13] In this respect, considerable authority was given to the demons and, in so doing, to the demoniacs. After all, they were, albeit involuntary, mouthpieces of these supernatural forces. Questioning the invading sprit was linked to learned magic, to the idea of conjuring spirits and commanding demons via ritual magic.[14] In the thirteenth century, conjuring could still be considered a learned art. The approach changed profoundly, however. By the fourteenth century it was no longer only a skill acquired by learning, but a moral misdemeanour of the worst kind, entailing the worship of demons.[15]

Speaking demons in hagiographic material were one of the building blocks validating the sanctity of a local intercessor which, in turn, contributed to the construction of the sacred. The demons' role was, for example, to tell how long the affliction was going to last and more importantly to name the saint who had the power to cast the demons out. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, again in Siena, a certain Christinella was cured of demonic possession by Johannes of Siena, a friar of the order of the Servants of Mary. Soon after the death of Johannes, the friars were preaching about the first miracle he had performed post-mortem when this demoniac was brought to the monastery. When Christinella heard the narration of the first miracle she, or once again the demon inside her, started to shout: 'Oh, now has come the time of my departure and the

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[12] 'Post adiurationes plures & aquæ benedictæ aspersionem, petitum fuit a dæmone, si recessurus erat in breui.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237.

[13] 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' pp. 778–79, for another case, see p. 883. Also 'Pietro del Morrone debet me liberare,' *Die Akten des Kanonisationsprozesses in dem Kodex zu Sulmona. Monumenta Coalestiana Quellen zur Geschichte des Papstes coelestin V*, ed. by Fraz Xaver Seppelt (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1921), pp. 248–9.

[14] On learned magic, see for example Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites* and Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits*.

[15] David Collins, 'Necromancers and Saints from Simon Magus to Albertus Magnus: The Medieval Background to a Fifteenth-Century Problem,' in *Identity and Alterity in Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, ed. by Ana Marinković and Trpimir Vedriš (Zagreb: Hagiotheca, 2010), pp. 219–33. For warning examples of learned magic and failed rituals, see Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, 2–4. See, however, 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 883 for a layman conjuring a demon with the help of a book, likely a manual.

liberation of Christinella.' A lot of people were present at the scene, but not apparently to listen to the sermon, since the author explained that this demoniac was very famous. The friars conjured the spirit and asked why it had not left his victim earlier through the exorcizing powers of other saints. The demon replied: 'because God has reserved this miracle for this particular saint, since that is how it pleases him to distribute the divine wisdom.' The author adds that this astonished many—not the message as such, but its form, since the woman herself was simple and *idiota*, yet she spoke perfect Latin.[16]

An actual dialogue, an interrogation of the invading spirit, is recorded in the miracle collection of Ambrose of Siena. Curiously enough, the demon immediately asked for the possessed girl's relative, Dinus de Rosia, who conducted the interrogation and was instructed by the demon to take the girl to the shrine of Saint Ambrose, otherwise the demon's associates would come and kill her. Prompted further, the demon explained that he was sent there by his Lord to defend the girl against other demons, and the girl did not deserve such a death. The demon could not, however, stay longer than that day, so they should embark on the pilgrimage quickly.[17]

The case comes close to the topos of *diabolica bonitas*; the demon doing good deeds and even protecting Christians. In exempla, benevolent demons could even protect Christians from more vicious demons. In addition, they could serve as the faithful servant of a knight, convey a knight to Jerusalem, or prevent people from eating stolen calves, as is narrated in the exempla of Caesar of Heisterbach. The origin of such figures might well lie in folklore, as Aron Gurevich suggests.[18] Benevolent demons probably originated in the local social context, in the needs and imagination of the laity, but such cases were nonetheless accepted by learned men. A benevolent demon is a contradiction in terms and these figures have conflicting functions; they both relativize and strengthen the opposition of good and evil. The strengthening of binary oppositions is evident in the aforementioned

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[16] This compilation of miracles was recorded at the beginning of the fourteenth century; it was based on a register kept at the shrine with occasional exact dates and places but no direct testimonies. 'Vita ac Legenda Beati Ioachimi Senensis,' p. 392. Also 'Licet ipse esset idiota, tamen sic Latine loquebatur,' 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' pp. 449–50; also Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, 13. See also Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 389–90 for demons' linguistic skills.

[17] 'Dinus quidam de Rosia narrauit, quod cognata sua, nomine Ceccha, obsessa fuit a malignis per istum modum … Inter alia autem dixit: Mittatis pro Dino, scilicet supradicto, & dicatis ei, quod statim ducat Christianam Senas ad S. Ambrosium, qui liberabit eam: sin autem, habeo socios, qui occident eam. Veniens autem Dinus, dixit ei: Quid facis tu hic? qui respondit: Missus sum a Domino meo, vt defendam istam a socijs meis, quia non est digna tali morte: sed non possum hic esse vltra istam diem: & ideo cito ducas eam ad S. Ambrosium, antequam hinc discedam. Cui Dinus dixit: Quis est Dominus tuus? Qui eum nominare nolebat. Sed Dinus subiunxit: Nonne est Dominus tuus, Dominus Iesus Christus? Qui respondit: Sic.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237.

[18] Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 191. For other examples of this topos, see Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, 36–8.

case of the well-meaning possessing spirit. The dialogue between the demon and Dinus de Rosia continued. When the spirit had explained his presence by the bidding of his Lord, Dinus inquired who this Lord was. The spirit did not want to answer, but was forced to admit that it was Jesus Christ, confirming the fact that demons were subject to God and acted only on his command.

From a theological perspective, the role of the possession miracles was to manifest the eternal struggle of good and evil, and the victory of the divine powers. They helped to create and maintain the proper order of the world and demonstrate God's grace; in addition, they were a way to emphasize the holy powers of a heavenly patron.[19] This power could also be expressed in aggressive or even violent forms and the struggle could be concrete. The overpowering position of the saint could have been constructed by questioning the demons with torture and then expelling them in exorcisms.[20] For example, a demon asked Odo of Navarre why he was vexing him.[21] Likewise, the demons expelled by Rose of Viterbo exclaimed: 'Woe to us, we are going to the abyss' (*Væ nobis, eamus ad profundum*).[22]

When composing miracle collections, the clergy had an opportunity and even a responsibility to interweave didactic elements, like the hierarchy of cosmological powers, with the narrative. For them, the interaction between the sacred and the diabolical, which they saw as combat, was a necessary and welcome feature as it also signified the defeat of malign forces. This was crystallized in the collection of Ambrose of Siena in a comment written in between the miracles: 'The more we study the work of malign sprits, the more we learn of their wickedness, and the more the saints' piety makes the confrontation with them evident.'[23] In miracle narrations, the words of a demoniac had a certain rhetorical and even theological significance. 'What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God' (Mark 1:24).[24] This is what a demon inside a possessed man cried out to Christ in Capernaum, confirming the divinity and powers of Christ.

The saints were, after the Apostles, the successors of Christ and the holy ones of God. They, too, had the power to drive out malign spirits. The medieval

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[19] See also Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 235.

[20] Cohen, 'Sacred, Secular, and Impure,' p. 126.

[21] 'Senex cur me affligis?' 'Apographum processus informationis circa vitam, mortem, translationem et miracula B. Odonis,' p. 337.

[22] 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' pp. 449–50.

[23] 'Quanto plura malignorum daemonum facta scrutamur, tanto plures eorum nequitiae innotescunt, et tanto magis sanctorum pietas eis obsistentium elucescit.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237.

[24] Christ redeemed the sins of Christians, but he did not only patiently suffer for mankind; in theological rhetoric, particularly among the Dominicans, he was also described as bringing judgement to the world and persecution with it. In Dominican rhetoric, the persecuting Christ was targeted particularly against heretics, yet anyone turning away from Him and His truth and community could be considered an enemy of God. Ames, *Righteous Persecution*.

demoniacs were in that sense the successors of the Biblical prototypes: their role, like that of the demons in the Bible, was to reveal by word and deed the power of God. Therefore, the words predicting the identity of the exorcizing saint or the timing of the delivery were important details which had to be written down meticulously. The defeat and suffering of the demons was a further assurance of divine power and protection. Speaking demons seem to have been particularly important for the clergy in the process of negotiating and affirming the powers of the sacred, and the most loquacious demons are more readily found in didactic miracle collections. The demons and demoniacs were less vocal in canonization processes; they were not, however, entirely mute.[25] When their voice is heard, its aim was the same as in the didactic miracle collections: to take control of the situation. The powers of the sacred were part of this process, but instead of focusing on the eternal truths of supernatural forces, the intention was to comprehend and solve the current situation in daily life.

A Named Thing Is a Tamed Thing?

Identifying the invading spirit was one way for the participants to respond to possession, to give meaning to events, to comprehend and control them. Revealing the name of the enemy made the battle concrete and the malign spirit's defeat more significant. Naming the demon was also a contribution to the sacred, a way to flag the supreme powers of the divine. Naming was a general cultural trait, as the Devil, God's evil adversary, went under many names already in the Bible. Many of these were derived from Judeo-Christian-Gnostic traditions, like Lucifer or Belial. Names of foreign gods were also associated with the Devil, and many demons acquired names from local folklore or pre-Christian religions. Some of them were absurd or humorous, and probably their purpose was to ward off the fear the evil caused, or to render the fear more tolerable.[26] The names of witches' animal-like demons, familiars, also originated from folklore. Some were folk spirits or hero names, not to mention animal or people's names; some names were linked with magic, and some were even named after saints.[27]

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[25] See also Gail Ashton, *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (London: Routledge, 2000) for two voices in the hagiographic material: the authoritative male one and the voice of the female saint in the 'fissures' of the text. The title of this section is borrowed from her formulation.

[26] On the Devil's nicknames in folklore, see Russel, *Lucifer*, pp. 62–91, 97; cf. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 193, who argues that the purpose of demons' humorous characteristics in didactic narrations was not to lessen fear, but to make it more tolerable.

[27] Familiars were helpers perpetrating bad deeds for the witch, but also feeding themselves from her body. Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 135–40.

Examples of naming practices were many, as the Devil and his minions were not considered to be just faceless, unidentified, malign powers, but rather personified, named, individualized entities. Aron Gurevich has observed that the nature of medieval Christianity was one of latent Manicheanism, meaning an inherent, even if hidden, dualism.[28] Both official theology and lived experiences confirmed the bipolar nature of the world through the concrete and personified presence of good and evil forces. Demons were physically present and active agents; they spoke and could be interacted with. In hagiography, the forces of evil are not, however, furnished with as much individuality as the other end of the spectrum, the saints. The demons are rarely personified and named in possession cases. This seems to be in clear contrast to both learned magic, where certain demons are invoked and conjured by their names, and witchcraft cases, where the demonic familiars of a witch are often named.

Naming was a way to comprehend demonic powers for lay and clerical participants, but their views about spirit possession were not always unanimous. The differing responses to such a condition are clearly detectable in cases where the possessing spirit was not thought to be of demonic origin but rather the spirit of a local dead person. There seem to be clear local traits in the phenomenon of naming, as such cases can be found mainly in Italian hagiographic material. The belief in possession by the dead had deep roots in the Mediterranean area. Polytheistic beliefs from late antiquity may provide some explanation for it. The idea that the spirit stayed close to the corpse, especially immediately after death, and above all in cases of bad deaths, was widespread. The idea that the dead could possess the living was also accepted. Origen (ob. *c.* 254) even claimed, agreeing with some non-Christian authors and following a path set out by Plato, that bad souls became demons after death while waiting for Christ's second coming and their salvation.[29]

The restless souls of evil and vile people were called *lemures* or *larvae*; they were thought to roam from place to place molesting those who led wicked lives. This ancient non-Christian notion was also mentioned, and condemned, by Augustine in his *City of God*, where he firmly asserted the idea that the spirits of the dead, their ghosts or shades, could not invade the bodies of the living. The precursors of this belief did not only come from polytheistic religions, as Judaism also accepted the idea that the living could communicate with the dead. The idea that apparitions of the dead could be neutral changed, and in the later Middle Ages such apparitions were often linked or mixed with demons appearing in the form of a dead person. The belief that the dead, particularly those who had suffered a bad death, could come back and invade a person's body was obviously

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[28] Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 185.
[29] Ronald Finucane, *Ghosts: Appearances of the Dead and Cultural Transformation* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1996), pp. 7–9, 30, 33–4.

unorthodox, and was rejected by medieval and Renaissance theologians. According to theological doctrines, the dead had already passed on to the afterlife, to purgatory, but according to some beliefs possibly also directly to heaven or hell, and they did not dwell among humans anymore. However, as the repeated condemnations testify, these doctrinal constructions were often ignored by lay Christians; belief in spirit possession by the dead was strong.[30]

In the miracle collection of Gerard Cagnoli there are accounts of a boy called Bonaiunta, possessed by a recently deceased local person, of a youth possessed by Nerone, a deceased neighbour, of another boy called Bartholomeus possessed by a deceased priest from Lucca, of Franciscus, a prison guard possessed by Iohannes, a man killed the very same day, and of a girl named Duccia, possessed by her late mother. This list of possessing spirits is quite unusual; typically the possessing spirits were recently deceased, notorious, and feared local people, as will be exemplified in Chapter 6. Only the case of Franciscus fits this pattern, although the identity of the possessing spirit Iohannes remains unclear. It is not known whether he was a former resident of the prison Franciscus was guarding, and sentenced to death, or if he was a victim of one of the felons in this prison. The others, at least the neighbour and especially the mother, were close or even beloved.[31]

Nancy Mandeville Caciola has recently shown that belief in ghost possession, the return of the dead in spiritual form, was an enduring element, particularly in the Italian peninsula. This belief had already been refuted by early Christian theologians, yet such interpretations were still pervasive in the late Middle Ages. Lay people believed in possession by dead spirits, not only by demons, and occasionally they deemed these spirits to be of a benevolent nature. Sometimes people were not completely possessed by these well-meaning or neutral spirits, but rather worked as mediums for them; these mouthpieces could become the centre of a kind of spiritualistic cult. When the words of the possessing spirit were recorded, they often demanded prayers and masses for the soul of the possessing ghost.[32]

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[30] Nancy Mandeville Caciola, *Afterlives: The Return of the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 201; *lemures* were also mentioned by King James VI and I in his demonological treatise. Johan Weyer in his treatise from the end of the sixteenth century also mentions *lemures* as ghosts of the dead in ancient tradition. Johann Weyer, 'De praestigiis daemonum,' in *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance*, ed. by George Mora (New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1991), p. 16. Cf., however, Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, pp. 20–1 for examples of early modern Catholic theologians accepting the idea of disembodied souls wandering the earth and possessing people. On the relationship between the dead and the living on a more general level, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants. Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994).

[31] 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' pp. 145–9.

[32] Debates between clergy and laity on the nature of the possessing spirit were recorded in Italy up to the fifteenth century, Caciola, *Afterlives*, pp. 302–30; for spirit mediums in Southern France, pp. 259–301. On early modern Venetian examples of possession with a 'good' but not divine spirit, see Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 21.

This undoubtedly suited the needs of both lay and clerical participants of the negotiation. Such a spirit possession may have been a sign of prolonged and intense bereavement for the deceased, and a means to re-establish and enforce the proper order of the community, particularly after an unexpected bad death. For the clergy, it may have worked as a propagandistic tool proclaiming the need for penitence and prayers for the dead, and so reinforcing their position as intermediaries.

Examples of this sort cannot be found in hagiographic material. There, the cases were always categorized as liberations from demonic possession. Furthermore, only the prophesying of the date and details of recovery were recorded, not other words uttered by the spirit medium. If the invading spirit spoke words of hidden wisdom through their mouthpieces, or spoke of the faith of the soul after death, or if they had some unfinished business in this world, as was typical in the spiritualistic cults studied by Caciola, these elements were not recorded. Claims made by victims about the possessing entity were not always accepted; Fra Bartolomeus, the compiler of miracles of Blessed Gerard, makes it explicit that these cases did not involve possession by a ghost. According to him, Bonaiunta was fooled by a demon, and in other aforementioned cases it was expressly stated that the possessing demon lied to his victim.[33] The victims were not blamed for unorthodox beliefs or practices; they had simply been led astray by demonic tricks. Fra Bartolomeus' disbelief or scepticism was not directed against the idea of demonic powers or activity, quite the contrary: for him they were genuine cases of demonic possession.

In the process of naming, a distinction between demons and other potential possessing spirits could be made: Antonius Sclavus was possessed by seven spirits that could be distinguished from each other by demon names (*quos nominatim distinguebat per nomina dæmonum*).[34] This case is from the mid-fifteenth-century canonization process of Saint Rose of Viterbo. The demons were not named in the deposition as happened in the earlier cases, implying that these kinds of details were granted descriptive, but not explanatory, value as in earlier cases. The judicial requirements could have been stricter in this case than in the collection of Gerard Cagnoli, as this testimony was recorded in an official canonization hearing. Nevertheless, the torments and testimony of Antonius Sclavus, by the time of interrogation a Franciscan friar with the adopted name Andreas, tell of

[33] 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' pp. 145–9. The miracle collection of Ambrose of Siena contains a similar reference to demonic deception: Sapientia was possessed after her mother's cursing; she started to shout and say this and that is tormenting me, naming some dead people because of demonic deception. 'coepit clamare & dicere, talis & talis me cruciant, aliquos defunctos secundum deceptionem dæmonis nominando.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula de B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237.

[34] 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' pp. 449–50.

the continuing mode of thought: demons were not just anonymous malign forces, they could speak for and of themselves, and their names could be known.

The person who revealed the name of the possessing spirit was the victim, as he or she was the only one who could possess such information. However, the name must have been discussed, and accepted, by the surrounding community as well, and finally, it was also approved by the inquisitorial committee or by the compiler of the collection, since it was recorded. To provide the name of the demon may have been the demoniac's way to take an active role in the process so as not to be only a hapless victim. The naming of demons also served to construct the subordination of evil forces to good in the supernatural hierarchies. As Moshe Sluhovsky argues in his analysis of early modern exorcism rites, the naming of a demon helped to uncover its hidden nature, reveal its secrets, and drive it out. The naming in exorcism rituals would accelerate the delivery and remind the spirits, the possessed, and the bystanders that demons were destined for eternal damnation.[35] The name, like a demon's physical form in delivery, made the situation more comprehensible and even controllable; it was a crucial aspect in the interaction with the diabolical and the sacred. Naming the spirit was a way to strip away its powers; it was part of the process of taming the evil force.

Rituals at the Shrine

The sacred was concretized at the shrine of a saint. The shrine was an actual place and the holy powers of a saint were materialized in his or her relics. The sacred space around the shrine was not, however, a fixed category but rather in a flux, a social process in progress. As Patrick Geary notes, the relics of a saint do not in themselves possess value. They only reflect as much meaning as they are given by a particular community.[36] Therefore, the sacredness of a shrine was not stable but in need of constant reaffirmation. The liturgy and other clergy-ordained ceremonies were crucial in this process but not entirely dominant. Lay pilgrims' participation was needed, too.

In addition to the contribution made to the concept of the sacred on a general cultural level, pilgrimages were important on a personal level, too, as they enabled an initiative in the field of religion. The journey itself offered a performative space. The pilgrims could walk with their hands tied, barefoot, or flagellating themselves. Once at the shrine, the petitioners prayed in the vicinity of the relics. Those waiting for a cure could lie down close to or even climb upon the shrine; they could put an infected body part inside the shrine, since many of the tombs

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[35] Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, pp. 65–6.
[36] Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 5 *et passim*.

had an opening; or they could encircle it with a line of wax. Examples of the rituals are numerous in the depositions of canonization processes, yet, obviously, they varied from one cultural area to the next.[37] However, the sacred space was hierarchic, and submissive waiting, patience, and even a certain passivity seem to have been the most typical features of the performance of pilgrims seeking a cure at a shrine. Petitioners humbly waited for grace to be bestowed upon them, which underlined the hierarchy between the petitioner and the heavenly intercessor and highlighted the powers of the relics.

An instance of particularly active participation, up to a point where it comes close to control of the sacred sphere, can be found in the recovery of Ceptus Sperançe in the canonization process of Clare of Montefalco. Ceptus was a boy of ten or twelve years unable to walk because of his paralysed and bent legs, but he was cured on Clare's tomb. His mother made a vow to Saint Clare, took her son to the church, and put him on the sepulchre, where he was cured.[38] Ceptus himself is rather brief in his deposition about the actual healing process, but another witness, Andriolus Benvengnatis, is more informative. According to him, Ceptus was lying on the sepulchre with his hands joined in prayer, waiting for his cure. Then his legs started to straighten little by little. Ceptus was crying loudly since the change caused him much pain.[39] Another eye-witness, Petrus Andree, described how after Ceptus had lain on the shrine for a while, a rumour started in the church that one leg had straightened miraculously. People in the church inspected him and they put Ceptus back above the shrine to wait for his other leg to be healed, too. People prayed and invoked Saint Clare to perform another miracle. This happened and Ceptus' other leg was also straightened. From then on he could walk, though with a limp, after being completely paralysed.[40] It is the congregation's activity rather than Ceptus' own actions that the depositions underscore. Obviously, Ceptus was just a boy, but sometimes children of his age

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[37] On practices at the shrine, see Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 136–60; on geographical differences, Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Devotional Strategies in Everyday Life: Laity's Interaction with Saints in the North in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,' in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation*, pp. 21–45. On pilgrimages as performative space, see Jill Dubisch, *In a Different Space: Pilgrimage, Gender and Politics at a Greek Island Shrine* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). See also Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe*, pp. 2–24; Hamilton and Spicer, 'Defining the Holy: Delineation of Sacred Space,' pp. 1–26.

[38] *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, *testis* LXVIII, pp. 348–9. On the interconnection, interchangeability, and intermingling of various curative methods, see Amalia Galdi, 'Guarire nel medioevo tra taumaturgia dei santi, saperi medici e pratiche magiche,' in *Agiografia e culture popolari*, pp. 93–112 and Alessandra Foscati, 'Tra scienza, religione e magia: *incantamenta* e riti terapeutici nei testi agiografici e nei testi di medicina del Medioevo,' in *Agiografia e culture popolari*, pp. 113–28.

[39] *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, *testis* CCXXIX, p. 504.

[40] *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, *testis* LIII, pp. 307–8. Descriptions of symptoms of illness as well as signs of cure varied from one witness to another. For a more detailed analysis of Ceptus' illness, see Jenni Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Integration*, pp. 131–6; 263–5.

were active in their own curative rites. Not only his age but likely also his condition made him passive.

Similarly, being out of one's mind may explain the rather passive roles of the beneficiaries in many of the cases of demonic possession. Typically, just lying at the shrine is described as a curative ritual in several cases.[41] There is a striking difference compared to the exorcism practices of the early modern era. By that time, exorcisms were often spectacular rituals, and a member of the clergy the starring actor in them, as both Caciola and Sluhovsky confirm. Michael Goodich, however, sets the time limit earlier. He claims that exorcisms had already become a ritualized drama in the late Middle Ages. 'As in other cultures, the exorcism ceremony revealed in these sources [i.e. hagiography] indicates that both the victim and the audience participate in a ritualized drama in which certain cultural signs and messages are being conveyed which are as clear to the participants as speech itself.'[42] Ritual and drama are not underlined in the majority of the cases under scrutiny here, however. It seems that the role of ceremony in the cure of a demoniac may be overemphasized in this argument. Once the demoniac had reached the shrine, the depositions in canonization processes do not reveal much of the role of the audience. For the most part, delivery of a malign spirit was a divine grace; the deliveries may have been dramatic and ritualized but such elements did not form the core of the depositions. The drama of delivery was likely very important for the fame of the saint as a thaumaturge and the shrine as a healing centre. Indeed, it seems that the dramatic turning points may well have been more important for the local clergy, as they feature in local hearings and didactic miracle collections. For the local clergy, the dramatic elements offered room to manoeuvre, an option to claim an intermediary role in the construction of the sacred.

In miracle narrations the clergy's role can be compared to that of another professional group, namely doctors. The hagiographic genre required that an earthly remedy should not be as effective as a divine one, and a doctor's role, at least in the fourteenth-century canonization processes, was to give an expert opinion on the severity of an affliction and on the inadequacy of secular medicine to treat it.[43] Exorcism was undoubtedly a discourse of clerical authority and power,[44] but the delivery miracles supported these claims only in part. In miracle narrations, priests performing exorcisms were subordinate to the saint's exorcizing powers. In some miracle collections, they were, however, skilfully constructing their role as an intermediary between the malign spirits and their victims on the

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[41] 'Fecerunt eam iacere tota una nocte in ecclesia Sancti Augustiniani de Tholentino ante tumulum supradictum,' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino, testis* XX, p. 136.

[42] Goodich, 'Battling the Devil in Rural Europe,' p. 141. See also Raiswell and Dendle, 'Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon and Early Modern England,' p. 756.

[43] Lett, '*Judicium medicine* and *judicium sanctitatis*,' pp. 153–70.

[44] See Young, *A History of Exorcism*, p. 67.

one hand, and between the petitioners and the heavenly intercessor on the other, even if they did not perform the exorcisms as such.

A case in point is the collection of the miracles of Gerard Cagnoli from the 1340s. The compiler of the collection, Bartolomeus Albizi of Pisa, was a Franciscan friar, like the saintly candidate. Before recording these cases, Fra Bartolomeus had already written a life of the Blessed Gerard. The compilation is a collection of miracles recorded at the image of Gerard situated in the church of the Franciscan friars in Pisa. The preserved text is not the original notes taken after each miracle since it is organized according to the type of miracle; there are altogether ten headings or chapters. The cases are recorded in chronological order under each heading. Under the heading 'Liberations from torments and powers of the Devil' (*De liberatione a persecutoribus et potestate diaboli*), the third heading of the collection, there are a total of twenty-four cases, a remarkable number. From the quantitative point of view, Fra Bartolomeus' work seems to be a typical Italian miracle collection. At the beginning of this third chapter, Bartolomeus mentioned that during the first five years after the death of Gerard more than forty souls were liberated from the torments of demons.[45]

As the heading suggests, Bartolomeus does not seem to have made a clear distinction between demonic harassment and outright possession. He describes the situation often as invasion but also as molestation and anxiety.[46] Furthermore, not much attention in his formulations is given to the signs; they are not exemplified, nor is further proof concerning them required. It remains unknown how big a role Bartolomeus had in diagnosing the cases and whether the victims themselves agreed with his categorizations. As he plays a crucial role in the rituals, too, it is largely his perspective on the cases that the records reveal.

All the deliveries took place by the image in the friary, and Bartolomeus discussed the case with the participants at the church. A considerable part of the narration was given over to the curative rites, particularly the use of relics in delivery. The victims came or were taken to the image of Saint Gerard, where typically passages from the Gospel of John were read and the victim was signed with the relics of the saint.[47] Prayers were so common a practice in the process of recovery that Bartolomeus does not elaborate, but only refers to customary prayers (*dicto orationibus consuetis*). What is explicit in the cases, however, is the active performative role of Bartolomeus himself: according to the compilation, he is often the person needed at the scene; he signs the victims with the relics and

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[45] 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' p. 144; two extra cases were recorded before this heading: the aforementioned Yppolytus and a girl named Francisca, pp. 137, 142.

[46] 'fuisset a dyabolo molestatus'; 'fuisset iam a dyabolo … anxiatus'; 'arripitur a dyabolo'; 'oppressa a dyabolo'; 'a dyabolo fortiter anxiata'; 'a diabolo invasa.' 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' pp. 144–53.

[47] The Gospel of John was thought to hold many magical qualities; protection against demonic attacks was one of them. Finucane, *Ghosts*, p. 64.

makes them confess their sins. For example, when a thirteen-year-old girl named Pina was possessed, the possessing spirit made it clear on several occasions that it would exit only if the girl was signed with the relics of the blessed Gerard. Bartolomeus was preaching in another church when the girl was taken to the image of Saint Gerard. The spirit repeated that only the relics of Gerard would drive him out and, furthermore, only the one experienced friar could successfully sign the demoniac. Apparently, the bystanders believed the demon, since Bartolomeus was immediately called for: 'Help us quickly, since we are waiting [for you] with a severely molested girl in front of Saint Gerard.' After finishing his preaching, Bartolomeus went to the girl, read the Gospel of John and the usual prayers, signed her with the relics, and immediately the accursed one disappeared completely, after which Bartolomeus made Pina confess her sins.[48]

When a certain Franciscus was taken to Saint Gerard, it was again Bartolomeus who was fetched to the scene. A communal prayer was said and Bartolomeus signed him with the relics. Franciscus improved immediately and regained his sight, but not speech. Bartolomeus urged Franciscus to make his confession by signs, but this did not work out in the hoped-for way. Bartolomeus needed to resort to more effective means. He prepared a *cedula* with relics and carried blessed water along with the arm of the saint to the victim. The relics were placed upon him and 'water of the saint' was given to him to drink. Only then did the tongue of Franciscus loosen; he was able to make his confession and was at peace.[49]

The meaning of *cedula* in this context is a little uncertain. Typically, *cedula* was a small leaf of paper, a slip, or a note, while the related word *cedulone* was usually used for judicial documents in church administration; they were a means of making official announcements. *Cedulones* were meant to be attached to a church door or put up in some other public place. The word *cedula* was also used for textual amulets.[50] But how the notes were connected to the relics or what their use was after the cure remains unknown. Moreover, it is not known what was

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[48] 'Nisi signer cum reliquiis Sancti Gerardi, non exibo. Et cum quareret fratrem consuetum signare, Fratrem scilicet Bartholomeum domini Albisi…Statim ergo unum venit per illuc me…et ibi publice mihi dixit: Expedite cito, quia expectamini pro una puella fortiter molestata coram Sancto Gerardo. At ego [..] dicto Evangelio cum orationibus consuetis, ipsam cum Sancti Gerardi reliquiis consignavi. Et ecce immediate ille maledictus totam discerpens. [..] Et feci eam confiteri devote et, cedulam cum reliquiis ponens super eam.' 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' p. 148.

[49] 'Cum ergo, facta oratione communi, ipsum signassem cum reliquiis Sancti statim sensum visus est reparasse, sed non verbum et loquelam in ore. Et ideo feci eum confiteri per signa, ut peccatorum amonitio aperiret verbum in ore. Et dum nihil proficerem, ivi et paravi sibi cedulam cum reliquiis Sancti, et portavi de aqua benedicta cum brachio Sancti, et impositis super eum reliquiis, dedi sibi bibere de aqua Sancti. Et subito solute lingua.' 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' pp. 148–9.

[50] For example, declarations of papal courts could be published by *cedulones*. Per Ingesman, 'A Criminal Trial at the Court of the Chamber Auditor: An Analysis of a Registrum from 1515–1516 in the Danish National Archives,' in *Popes, Saints, and Crusades*, pp. 85–114; Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), p. 13.

written on them, but likely they were not meant to be official documents. They might have contained prayers, verses from the Bible, or parts of exorcism formulae, but the contents were not described. It is possible that they were a part of the rituals intended to conjure the spirits or exorcize them, and contained words or symbols that could subject the demons to the exorcist's power; at this time necromancy, conjuring spirits, and exorcism were not clearly distinct performances.[51] In its original meaning, the word *exorcizo* meant to swear an oath, and it was close in meaning to *coniuro*, to take an oath. *Coniuro*, however, had magical connotations like its modern English equivalent, conjure; it also meant combining together by an oath. The quasi-magical nature of exorcisms had been acknowledged in antiquity and continued to be so throughout the Middle Ages. Similarly, the difference between *adiuro*, to command, and *exorcizo* was not clear; adjurations were often used in the context of healing and in some exorcism rituals as well.[52]

It is highly possible that Fra Bartolomeus considered their content to be so self-evident for his main audience, most likely the other Franciscan friars, that further explanations were not required in the text. As there are no mentions of adjuration rituals, these *cedulae* may have been secondary relics; Bartolomeus may have rubbed the original relics with the paper, and some of the curative and protective powers of the saint were transferred to the paper. The name of Gerard could also have been written on the *cedula*, the saint's name reflecting his power and offering extra protection. Hagiotherapy, which could consist of charms, prayers, and religious texts or words as a healing method, can be found in remedy collections, particularly in Southern Europe. Saints' names written on parchment were used as textual amulets and recommended for curative purposes outside learned circles.[53] Obviously, this mode of thought also held superstitious connotations and can hardly be separated from the word magic, showing how medicine, religion, and magic were intertwined and not clearly distinguishable from each other in the field of healing.

The use of a *cedula* is mentioned only in this collection. The references can be found in many of the cases of demonic possession, but not in other types of recoveries, hence it was clearly linked with protection from personified evil. This is also emphasized in the terminology: some of the victims were defended or fortified by it (*munitam Sancti cedulam*). Special mention was made of the need

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[51] It is possible that the text was the opening verses of the Gospel of John, as Bartolomeus uses it in other instances as well. Gospel's hymn-like prologue was considered apotropaic and was frequently used in textual amulets to ward off demons. Skemer, *Binding Words*, pp. 87–8. The approach to necromancy and conjuring spirits was changing; during this period it was no longer seen as a learned art, but the changes were not systematic and straightforward. Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell*, p. 46. See also Young, *A History of Exorcism*, p. 75.

[52] For etymology and magical connotations, Young, *The History of Exorcism*, pp. 18–19, 39–40.

[53] On recommendations for this kind of practice in Southern European remedy collections, see Niiranen, 'Mental Disorder in Remedy Collections,' in *Mental (Dis)Order*, pp. 170–2.

to prepare the *cedula* (*paravi sibi cedulam cum reliquiis*).[54] Its preparation was part of the ritual process of recovery and in the narrations Bartolomeus seems to consider himself nearly equal in importance to Saint Gerard. Bartolomeus did not perform official exorcisms in these recoveries, yet his role was crucial and apparently recognized as such by the participants. The image of the saint or relics was not enough. It was specifically Bartolomeus, the mediator between the victims and the heavenly intercessor, who was fetched to the scene, and he had the responsibility for the correct observance of the ritual process; even the malign spirits acknowledged his ability in this field. Following the lead of the demons in Capernaum, the ones in Pisa bore witness not only to the holy powers of Saint Gerard but also to those of Fra Bartolomeus.

The cases recorded by Bartolomeus manifest clerical authority and power, but their core message is still divine grace working through the relics of the saint. However, another important message in the collection seems to be the need for control: the laity should not be too independent in its interaction with the divine and with Church rituals. Furthermore, laymen were also liable to misunderstand demonic forces, as disagreement over the identity of the possessing spirits showed. Interaction between the sacred and the diabolical had to be mediated, structured, controlled, and in particular interpreted by a more experienced party. In this case that party does not seem to have been the clergy in general, or even the Franciscan friars, but the compiler of the collection, Fra Bartolomeus.

Moshe Sluhovsky dates the beginning of the clericalization of exorcismal practices to the fourteenth century, but he sees them as mainly individual enterprises before the second half of the sixteenth century. The compilation of Fra Bartolomeus seems to provide an early example of this process. The authorized Roman Rite in 1614 and curial regulations later in the century were a hierarchal regulatory effort to replace the diverse methods of individual practitioners, priests, and lay healers with one standardized liturgical rite performed by a specially selected and trained group of exorcists.[55] The miracles of Gerard Cagnoli provide a different view of this process: it did not only work top-down, but seems to have had a shared basis. Even if the saint was still the main force behind the deliveries, Fra Bartolomeus was a vital factor in making them happen; this was acknowledged by the witnesses as well as by the demons. It seems that in this context the power of the relics was not enough on its own. The laity seeking help acknowledged the position of Bartolomeus as a ritual specialist since it was he who ensured that the relics functioned effectively.[56] Unlike the victims and witnesses, Bartolomeus was able to read the right texts, to say the right prayers, and to perform the correct rituals.

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[54] 'Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Gagnoli,' p. 148.

[55] Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, pp. 61–8.

[56] In a sense Bartolomeus was also a 'miracle mediator,' to use the term coined by Nicole Archambeau, 'Miracle Mediators as Healing Practitioners.' In her examples laywomen with healing expertise could have worked as intermediaries using relics in the healing process; Bartolomeus'

He helped the victims to make better use of all the facilities the sacred space offered, as he had access to the relics. The assisting friar had gained a recognized position in the construction not only of the fame of this saint, but also of the sacred itself.

The crucial element in many deliveries in cases of demonic possession was the sacred space itself. Regularly, the final cure took place at a shrine. From late antiquity on, relics manifested their powers by driving out malign spirits. In late medieval hagiography, the sacred sphere still played an important role in the recovery of demoniacs, even if 'distance miracles' had become the most typical category. Scholars have debated the evolution, dating, and rationale for the increase in distance miracles in the late Middle Ages. For some, it is a question of cultural changes on a European level, while others argue for local, cultic explanations. Christian Krötzl, for example, argues that the increase in the number of distance miracles testifies to the emergence of a new, more individual approach to saints. André Vauchez, however, explains the change by the increase of cultic images. Ronald Finucane has shown in the case of Thomas Cantilupe that the division between shrine miracles and distance miracles is essentially a question of the maturation of the cult; at first the pilgrims came from the vicinity of the shrine and made the journey to the sacred space to seek a cure. The further the cult spread, the further the pilgrims came from; thus they waited for the cure at home and made the pilgrimage only afterwards as a display of gratitude.[57]

In deliveries from malign spirits, the vow was often made at a distance, but the final liberation took place at the shrine. The demoniac's ability to act was crucial for the location: a partial recovery or at least a lucid interval was a prerequisite for independent invocation by the victim. When the demoniac was an object of curative rites, in other words out of his/her mind and taken on a pilgrimage by others, the cure in its entirety typically took place at the shrine. In these cases, part of the ritual was often the difficult journey to the shrine and the demon's resistance on entering the sacred place. Resistance and forced pilgrimages appear in the depositions as well, but usually only in passing and not as a crucial element.

Leigh Ann Craig has observed that women outnumbered men in forced pilgrimages, when people *sine sensu* were taken by force to the shrine against their will.[58] Care is needed, however, when undertaking a statistical analysis of

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expertise was in the field of religion but the skilful use of relics, especially in cases of demonic possession, was part of the curative process.

[57]   Christian Krötzl, 'Miracles au tombeau—miracles à distance: approches typologiques,' in *Miracle et Karama. Hagiographies médiévales comparées 2*, ed. by Denise Aigle (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 557–76; Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident*, p. 537; and Ronald C. Finucane, 'Pilgrimages in Daily Life: Aspects of Medieval Communication Reflected in the Newly Established Cult of Thomas Cantilupe (d. 1282), Its Dissemination and Effects upon Outlying Hereford Villagers,' in *Wallfahrt und Alltag in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Gerhard Jaritz and Barbara Schuh (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), pp. 165–217.

[58]   Craig, *Wandering Women*, pp. 187–219.

the methods of cure since, as has already been shown, not only the symptoms but also the extent and accuracy of details varied from case to case, and particularly from one collection or process to another. The same details were not considered relevant in each collection. Nevertheless, it seems that more importance was attached to the use of force when women demoniacs were involved than when men were. A case in point is *dopna* Antonella, the wife of Cola. She had suffered from spirit possession for more than a year when her husband decided to take her to Naples, to the shrine of James of Marches. According to the records, she shouted at the people accompanying her that they would never have the power to take her there.[59] The response of her pilgrim companions was that God, the Virgin Mary, and James had more power than she did. On an ideological level, it was obviously not a fight between the group and the demoniac, but a battle of cosmological forces, the outcome of which was obviously positive: Antonella felt better during the journey, talked calmly, and made her confession at the shrine.

Typically, the tied-up victims were carried to a shrine and they just lay there; they did not take any initiative in the interaction rituals with the divine. The victims of possession were at the centre of the action but rather than being active agents, they were merely an object in the rituals. Their object-like status is particularly emphasized in the aforementioned case of Cristina, a young bride afflicted already in her childhood and stricken by a fierce possession after her wedding. She was not tied up, as one of her symptoms was her tightly clenched legs; it was as if they were nailed together with iron nails. She was unable to move her limbs and had difficulties in speaking, seeing, and sensing. Cristina was a passive object yet simultaneously the focus of much interest: when she was taken by cart to the shrine, many of the inhabitants of Vadstena and surrounding areas came to see her. Apparently, they came to the scene in anticipation of entertainment, 'a good supernatural battle with much gnashing of teeth,' as Nancy Caciola sees public exorcisms.[60] In this case, they were not disappointed. The demon resisted entrance to the shrine; he made her heavier and heavier for her husband and the man assisting him to carry inside the chapel. Once inside, the demon tried to drag her out so that her husband needed to grip her head to hold her inside; at least, that is how the local clergy constructed the performance. Cristina's case is found in a letter written by the Bishop of Linköping and recorded in a local hearing of Birgitta's miracles; no direct depositions about the case were taken.

Once at the shrine, all who knew how to sing (*congregatis omnibus in loco cantare scientibus*) gathered around her during the next day and sang hymns and antiphons to expel the malign spirit. Finally, after a week at the shrine, a relic of

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[59] 'Et voy non havete may tanta forza che mece fazate andare.' BAV Vat. Lat. 1218, ff. 247v–248r. Cf. 'mulier extraneta vexata malo spirito clamans non ducatis me,' *Die Akten des Kanonisationsprozesses*, p. 230.

[60] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 235.

Birgitta's head was placed on her head and a silver cross was tied around her neck, a cross that Birgitta herself had placed on the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. After that, her recovery proceeded stepwise: first she regained her speech, then sense of smell, and finally sight. She was able to move only after the former confessor of Birgitta came to her. She was depicted as a target of demonic malice and then of curative rites: she was taken to the shrine, the demon tormented her visibly, and then she was the focus of various rituals. In the narration, the importance of the local clergy's ritual participation, the singing and placing of relics upon her, is emphasized, not Cristina's own agency. She did participate in the rituals of thanksgiving after the cure, but they only underline her inability to participate independently. She offered an oblation to the shrine and returned home. She was, however, possessed anew. The clerics recording the case surmised that she did not show enough gratitude, and owing to her ingratitude was afflicted again.[61] Rather than an agent, Cristina was an intermediary in the construction of the sacred; her continuing and renewed tribulation affirmed both the malice of demons and the superior powers of the relics of Birgitta. At the same time, the narration reinforced the authority of the local clergy in handling the relics and controlling the sacred space.

Through ritual participation various groups had a constitutive role in the interaction between the sacred and the diabolical. The clergy held, obviously, privileges in this as they had access to relics and other facilities of the sacred space, as is shown both in the collection of Fra Bartolomeus and in the case of Cristina. Yet, lay participation was needed as well, since pilgrims were a prerequisite for a pilgrimage site. The affirmation of sainthood was similarly a process, as it, too, was a socially constructed category: a saint was essentially a saint *for* others and *by* others, as Pierre Delooz has put it.[62] Without devotees, there was no cult. In the process of affirming the sanctity of relics, demoniacs and the expelled malign spirits had a specific role, one based on the prevailing general Christian tradition and theology. The exorcism miracles at a shrine both signified the sacred and created it. In the social experience of the participants, pilgrims, and recovered demoniacs, the sacred itself was the active agent recreating order.[63]

Signs of Delivery

The expulsion of the malign spirits and the signs of recovery were the core of a miraculous delivery; therefore they were also often recorded accurately. Signs of

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[61] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 121–3, 175–6.

[62] Pierre Delooz, 'Towards a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church,' in *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. by Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 194–9, 208.

[63] See also Döring, 'Introduction,' pp. 11–12. On the importance of the participants' behaviour in this process, see Hamilton and Spicer, 'Defining the Holy: Delineation of Sacred Space,' pp. 3–4, 16.

delivery were crucial for all the participants: the inquisitorial committee, the local community, as well as the family and the victim him- or herself. The inquisitorial committee wanted to ascertain whether a miracle had taken place, even if explicit questions about the delivery were rarely posed. Members of the community were keen to known that the nuisance and disorder were over; they were often willing to accept the cure once the disturbing symptoms had stopped. For them, a regained clear state of mind was enough evidence of a miraculous recovery. It may have been important for the victim him- or herself to manifest some clear signs, though. It would have demonstrated to others his or her recovered state and new position as a former demoniac, as well as facilitated reintegration into society.

An example of explicit interest shown by commissioners can be found in the canonization process of Ambrose of Massa: Palmeria was asked if she felt anything when the demons left her. She replied that she was so alienated by the demons that she did not feel their departure.[64] When the aforementioned Benghipace was cured at the shrine of John Buoni, she felt something coming up into her throat and out of her mouth.[65] A typical symptom of delivery mentioned by eye-witnesses was vomiting, often of black blood or other black matter. It was considered a sign that demons had been present and concrete proof of successful delivery. This kind of evidence was asked for and given especially in Italian material.[66] It may have indicated in particular the physical nature of the possession: the malign spirit was a tangible element in the body and stayed within the digestive system. Hence, its exit was also concrete, but it was quite often expressed non-verbally by the signs and gestures of the demoniac while entering or staying at the core of the sacred sphere, at the shrine of a saint.

The importance of the demon being disgorged is clearly visible in a case recorded in the canonization process of Saint Frances in the middle of the fifteenth century in Rome. A foreigner, a Hungarian according to the testimonies, was possessed by a demon and taken to the shrine of Saint Frances. When close to the shrine, he vomited three coals and was cured. Bystanders were astonished at

[64] 'Interrogata si persensit quando fugati sunt demones, respondit quod ita erat alienate mente quod <non> persensit. Interrogata quis erat present, quando fugati sunt demones, respondit quod non recordatur propter alienationem mentis.' 'Processus canonizationis B. Ambrosii Massani,' p. 595.

[65] 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' pp. 882–3.

[66] 'Purgata est […] cum multo clamore et ululantes et sanguinis vomitu,' 'Miracula Sancti Raymundi Palmarii confessoris,' pp. 661–2; 'evomendo sanguinem nigrum,' 'Apographum processus informationis circa vitam, mortem, translationem et miracula B. Odonis,' p. 337 and p. 340: 'pluries et turpiter vomendo sanata fuit et liberata a pluribus demoniis sicut ipsa dicebat '; 'vidit unum scardabonem nigrum in terra, qui dicebatur exivisse de hore eorum,' Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco, testis CCXXIII, p. 500; 'expuebat sputum nigerrimum et carbones, recte indicans quod erat quia nemo dat quod non habet,' 'Acta B. Francisci Fabrianensi,' AASS, April III, pp. 984–91, here p. 998; 'vomendo quasi carbones,' Die Akten des Kanonisationsprozesses, p. 249, see also p. 235; 'cecidit in terram quasi mortuus, vomendo & expuendo certum quid nigrum, quod multum clare & aperte videri non potuit, quid esset propter multitudinem ibidem astantium; quod postea disparuit.' 'Processus pro canonizatione S. Rosæ,' pp. 449–50.

the miracle, and the coal detail was mentioned by all the witnesses.[67] In cases from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, this element was considered a genuine sign of demonic possession and subsequent delivery; in other words, concrete evidence of a miracle. When such vomiting featured in the testimonies, their authenticity was not questioned. Later, however, the approach of at least some learned men changed: Johannes Weyer, a sixteenth-century physician and demonologist, claimed that these vomited items were not demons, nor had they ever been inside the stomach. They may have been devilish delusions, but not what the onlookers thought. Demons may have enticed the possessed to feign such a deed, but these items as such were not of demonic origin.[68]

Examples from literature and visual arts support the idea of delivery from a demonic possession as a physical phenomenon. A black creature or object exiting from the mouth of a victim is an indicative feature in imagery of demonic possession, the earliest examples being known from the end of the sixth century.[69] Probably, the images affected the way the participants conceptualized possession and, particularly, delivery: for them it was a concrete phenomenon. The exiting black creature is often depicted as an imp-like figure, while in miracle narrations and depositions the exiting object is often amorphous, but concrete and regularly black. The black, burned, and coal-like appearance of demons was explained by Caesar of Heisterbach as an indication of their position and residence: they had just come from hell's fire.[70]

When there were no concrete black objects or creatures to be vomited, narrations could also mention more unearthly creatures as a sign of delivery. For example, in the miracles of Ambrose of Siena an unnamed girl, once the tormenting spirit had left her, called to her kinsman, Bonnannus de Ficeclo, and said, 'Don't you see the blackest of things?' (*nonne videtis nigerrimum?*), claiming that the demon had visibly left her body.[71] Referring to a black figure may have been a verbal replication of images of a black imp exiting the victim as a sign of delivery. It may also have played a part in the process of making sense of the event, and even a way to claim an autonomous position in them: the physical form made the Devil more comprehensible, even controllable to some extent. Demoniacs

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[67] *I processi inediti per Francesca Bussa di Ponziani*, pp. 122–4.

[68] Johann Weyer, 'De praestigiis daemonum,' pp. 286–91.

[69] Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, 'Visualizing the Demonic: The Gadarene Exorcisms in Early Christian Art and Literature,' in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, ed. by Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012), pp. 439–57. The first written depictions of demons visibly leaving the possessed are from the same era. In late antiquity demons were, however, typically invisible and manifested their presence only through speech.

[70] Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, V, cap. 5. See also Gregg, *Devils, Women and Jews*, p. 33.

[71] 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 236. See also 'vidi vere diabolum in vilissima forma per fenestram egredientem.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 540.

themselves rarely had an active role in the actual curative rituals, as was noted above. By bodily signs they could, however, claim agency in their own deliveries.

Correspondingly, when Francisca was cured, a monstrous four-legged black creature exited her and fled. The demons were expelled after the invocation of Rose of Viterbo, who appeared in a vision and reassured the victim: 'Do not be afraid. You have been liberated and cured' (*Noli timere, quia liberata & sana facta es*). The witnesses to this case were neighbours as well as a few friars. No evidence was given as to whether they had personally seen the horrendous black creature themselves. Bonnannus de Ficeclo apparently did not see 'the blackest of things' himself, either. Compared to the horned, hoofed, and double- or triple-faced images in churches, the verbal depictions of exiting demons were quite plain. Perhaps the participants lacked either the words or need for a fuller description. For the victim and bystanders, only the exit of the cause of affliction in a form recognizable as demonic was needed. This was enough for the inquisitorial committee as well. Francisca's case is exceptional; it is the most detailed example to be found in a sworn deposition.

The exit of the demon was not always violent or painful, even if the hagiographic model of delivery miracle anticipates the tormenting of malign spirits by the holy power of the relics. For example, a ten-year-old girl was liberated after five years of possession by sneezing. In the miracle collection of Ambrose of Siena, the sneeze was accepted as a sign of delivery, undoubtedly because the invading spirit had proclaimed it as the sign in advance.[72] However, even milder signs were counted as indications of delivery. One demon announced via the mouth of a possessed girl that when she sighed, *flatum faciet*, he would withdraw. Yet another malign spirit was questioned about the signs of delivery, and the possessed girl replied that once she 'syncopates' (*syncopizavero*) at the shrine, she will be delivered. The meaning of *syncopizare* is probably to faint; it is also used on other occasions to describe feeling pain.[73] The demoniacs were rarely able to testify verbally to their suffering; it was visible only in bodily manifestations. Their bodily gestures communicated the otherwise 'unspeakable' elements of their experiences.

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[72] 'Et hoc, inquit, erit signum, quia tunc hæc sternutabit.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237. See also 'emissa spuma ore suo,' 'Processus apostolici B. Joannis Boni,' p. 799; 'Ad processum de vita et miraculis B. Petri de Luxemburgo,' CLXXII, p. 576 for a demon exiting as black smoke with a horrible smell.

[73] 'Sed iterum interrogauit eum: Quod signum erit recessus vestri? Qui respondit: Quando flatum Christiana faciet, recedemus. Cum igitur ad sepulcrum beati huius Patris esset adducta, in flatu, vt prædictum fuerat, omnes ab ea maligni spiritus recesserunt.' 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii,' p. 237; 'Deinde petiuerunt a dæmone: Quod signum habemus de excessu tuo? qui sub persona puellæ respondit: Cum peruenero ad sepulcrum Sancti & syncopizauero, liberata ero,' p. 237. Other examples of *syncopizare* in this collection as a symptom of pain in different kinds of miracles are: 'Ex dolore autem pressuræ syncopizauit,' p. 225; 'subito passus dolorem cordis cecidit in terram & syncopizauit,' p. 227; 'post multos stridores & dæmonis reclamationes syncopizauit,' p. 236.

Outgoing air, whether smoke, sigh, or sneeze, was obviously a suitable medium for a spiritual creature to move in. Some intellectuals of the era claimed that even if demons could assume a body or any corporeal form they wished, their bodies were made of air.[74] The claim that a malign spirit could exit via breath accords with this idea. However, at the same time a sigh or a breath is, if not concrete as such, at least observable. It was a substance leaving the body, and it could be perceived and testified to by others. These cases reflect the learned theories about demonic nature, offer sound evidence for the delivery, and resonate in particular with the laity's down-to-earth attitude that evil was something external but concrete. A malign spirit's entrance into the body could be explained by physical facts, like swallowed demons, but its exit was also often discernible.

Other, non-physical yet tangible signs of exit can be found as well. The six lamps that were extinguished when a demoniac was delivered at the shrine of Odo of Navarra reflect a similar state of mind: the exiting of the malign spirit was concrete enough to be discernible. The witness mentioning this detail was a cleric, Raynaldus Bonihomini. This detail was likely significant for him because of his background and education.[75] In the theological context, the extinguishing of the lights also bore symbolic significance, since light was associated with many positive elements in Christian tradition, such as purity, righteousness, and wisdom. Christ was the light of the world (John 8:12) and God himself the father of lights (James 1:17). The eternal opposites of God and salvation were obviously the Devil and damnation, and this was also expressed in the Bible by using light as a metaphor: the evil-doers hate the light (John 3:20), and the lamp of the wicked shall be put out (Proverbs 13:9). Thus, the extinguishing of the lights at the shrine of Odo of Navarra not only manifested concrete proof of the exiting spirit, it also testified to the spirit's inherent wickedness.

The aforementioned details, like vomiting and breaths of air, testify to how demonic possession was understood in concrete terms: something evil and alien entered into a person and in the recovery it left. Didactic narrations seem to have emphasized the more dramatic turning points in the recovery. In these narrations, the torment of the demon was crucial in signifying the sacred and affirming its power. For those suffering from malign spirits, the victim and his or her nearest, smaller, more practical things, like sensory elements, were enough to affirm the delivery and holy powers of the relics. Both grand and small gestures, however,

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[74] Thomas Aquinas' perspective was the strictest, as he argued that demons, like angels, were pure spirit with no bodies at all. On Aquinas' and other theories, see Young, *A History of Exorcism*, pp. 72–3.

[75] 'Addidit quod in liberatione extincte fuere sex lampades coram sepulchre,' 'Apographum processus informationis circa vitam, mortem, translationem et miracula B. Odonis,' p. 339. The other witnesses did not mention the lights, pp. 330, 334, 340. The hearing was held in Abbruzzi in 1240. See also Gerardus de Fracheto, 'Vitae fratrum,' pp. 198–9: 'In ingressu autem ecclesiae exsufflans extinxit omnes lampades uno flatu' and 'Vita ac Legenda Beati Ioachimi Senensis,' p. 392 for lamps broken into pieces 'lampadem confringum' at the exit of a demon.

testified to the saint's exorcizing powers; they were a method to get a grip on the situation, to explain what had happened, and to restore proper order. For the victims, they were personal responses to the affliction and attempts at integration back into society, a way to demonstrate that the torment was over. Bodily gestures could communicate spiritual matters. Sensory elements were, like rituals, a way for the laity to participate and claim agency in the negotiations over the sacred. Small as these details may have been, they were, nonetheless, significant for the participants and a clerically approved interpretation of their performance and of the course of events.

Conclusions

The sacred, both as a concept and a space, was an essential element in religious beliefs and practices; its mental and social aspects were significant constituents of the medieval worldview. In the miraculous deliveries from demonic possession, the binary forces, the sacred and the diabolical, were interacting. They were inseparably linked, and even necessary for each other's existence. By their speech and tribulations, the demons contributed to the construction of the sacred. Their defeat manifested the power of a local intercessor.

The shrine of a saint was a liminal space; the barriers between the visible and hidden worlds were temporarily weakened and a human being could momentarily cross the borders. The sacred space made the connection between Christians and the divine comprehensible and concrete. In addition to attendance at the shrine, rituals were needed. Communication between the sacred and profane spheres, a relationship with the divine, could be attained through various bodily practices, gestures, and symbols. Laymen and -women were not simply bystanders and onlookers: by embarking on various kinds of pilgrimages, offering different votive oblations, and performing thanksgiving rituals after a miracle, the participants of a delivery miracle took part in the formation of the sacred. They took part in the sacralization process.[76] Religious spaces did not only provide the setting within which rituals took place. They also contributed in important ways to the very meaning of these rituals; they manifested the power of God and the saints; the power of clerics, orders, or monasteries housing the shrine; and finally they enabled the empowerment of a group of pilgrims or an individual. This empowerment might have been spiritual, when the divine was experienced at the shrine, or social when the experiences, tribulations, and cures reinforced or recreated personal or collective identities.

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[76] On the interconnection of space and behaviour, see also Jennifer Mara De Silva, ' "Piously Made": Sacred Space and the Transformation of Behavior,' in *The Sacralization of Space and Behavior*, pp. 1–33.

On the didactic level, the demons and their utterances, the combat with them, and their subsequent defeat were an established theme of the hagiographic genre. The witnesses in canonization hearings seem to have focused more on the demoniacs than on the malign spirits. The cure was accepted once the disturbing behaviour stopped; no grand drama was required as proof of delivery. However, often some concrete signs were readily apparent: vomiting, expelling black matter, smoke, even sneezing, or a breath. Hearing, seeing, and smelling them rendered the demons more concrete, and hence potentially more controllable. Sensory elements were part of the process, giving meaning to both the affliction and subsequent cure. Naming the invading spirit followed a similar logic of rendering the situation more comprehensible and controllable, even if the practice of naming reveals a clear fracture between clerical and lay conceptualization of the matter: for the laity, not all invading spirits were of demonic origin.

The interaction between the sacred and the diabolical was a crucial part of the lived religion of the participants. Community responses were also meant to affirm the sanctity of the local intercessor and sacredness of his or her shrine. These negotiations intersected with individual, communal, and general cultural spheres. Taking part in them offered an individual a way to give meaning to his or her affliction, an option of finding a cure, and a possibility to reintegrate into the community. On the communal level, they enabled the danger to peace and harmony to be identified and confirmed the protection given by a heavenly patron. The unifying element that cut across individual, communal, and general Christian levels was the search for affirmation of God's continuing grace towards Christians.

6

The Interwoven Fabric of the Sacred and the Political

Even when the causality behind the tribulation had been established and the condition categorized as well as the method for cure decided upon and searched out, demonic possession was not yet over. Chapter 5 demonstrated that demonic presence contributed also to the construction of the sacred. This seems to have been a common goal of all the participants: the demoniacs, co-pilgrims, and the clergy. As religion was so tightly interwoven with other elements in the society and culture of the later Middle Ages, demonic possession also contributed to other discussions: the interaction between the sacred and the diabolical extended to the political. Opponents could be demonized by naming the demons with names associated with a community's adversaries, and demons could also be used as a conscious rhetorical device in sacralization processes. Demonic presence played a part in constructing collective identity and enhancing a community's coherence; it reflected political alliances.

Obviously, the practices varied from one geographical area to the next. Therefore, this chapter focuses on case studies to illuminate the overlapping of the sacred and the political, and suitable cases can be found in collections where the categorization of demonic possession was quite liberal. First, the focus is placed on named demons in Italian material, specifically in the register of Saint Zita and the canonization process of Nicholas of Tolentino, and on the demonization process of an enemy. This kind of negotiation was a joint effort of both lay and clerical participants and a method to create a cultic community. Next, scrutiny is turned on the North, since the propagation of the saintly powers of Birgitta was done by using demonic presence as a rhetorical tool. To illuminate these processes, the local recording practices and methods are analysed: demonic presence and punishment miracles were deliberate choices; politically laden acts to affirm the position of Birgitta in both heavenly and earthly hierarchies. Such cases were also a way to create collective identity and enhance a sense of self, as in the Southern examples, but the active participants in the Northern context were the local clergy. A joint feature for both contexts was the intertwining of the sacred, the demonic, and the political.

Defining the Boundaries of a Cultic Community

On 5 May 1278 in Lucca, Monacha, the wife of Bonamici, originally from the nearby community of Sirico Garfagnana, stepped in front of notaries at the shrine of Saint Zita and claimed that she had miraculously recovered from spirit possession by the intercession of the said saint; the possession had lasted for five years.[1] There is hardly anything that is particularly exceptional about this, since cases of demonic possession were numerous in Italian hagiography. Demons seem to have made a special point of harassing the devotees of Saint Zita, however, since there were altogether thirteen such cases in this register. The sufferings of Italian demoniacs were often of long duration, so Monacha's five years of torment were not exceptional, either. Furthermore, victims themselves, like Monacha, can regularly be found testifying in their own cases. Another typically Italian feature is that it was unclear whether Monacha was possessed by demons or by the spirits of two apparently mortal men.[2] In her account, Monacha was burdened and vexed by two demons, but then she went on to explain the situation, introducing the spirits, it may be said, to the inquisitorial committee: one was named Nappoleone and the other Soldanus, who was from Sirico, her place of origin, as she added. In this respect Monacha's case was yet again rather typical: in five out of thirteen cases in the registers of Saint Zita, the demoniac could name her tormentors, and the names indicate their human, rather than demonic, origin.

A noteworthy feature in this register is the locating of these spirits: the demons or tormenting spirits are not only named, but also their place of origin is given. The very same day as the aforementioned Monacha, Bonuccia from Calavorna, originally from Viliana Garfagnana but then living in Pisa, testified that she was tormented by two demons named as Uguiccione de Calavorna and Lupardus di Laddamare.[3] Five days later Jacobina from the village of Corellia Garfagnana was taken to the shrine, where she recovered. She had been tormented by one demon, who had identified himself as Sanna de Corellia. Migliore, from the village of Montale in the Pistoia region, was tormented by 24 other demons; how she managed to count them is not known. She had been delivered from twenty-three of them earlier, but the last one, named Gentiano de Corsica (most likely Corsena, another

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[1] 'ipsa a quinque annis citra semper fuit gravata & vexata a duobus dæmonibus. Unus quorum nominatus Nappoleone, & alius Soldanus, qui fuerat de suprad. loco Sirico.' 'Miracula de S. Zitae Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' p. 519.

[2] Another collection with an abundance of cases of this kind is that of Gerard Cagnoli, which was discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, the register of miracles of Henry of Bolzano from Treviso may also be mentioned in support of this claim. Among Henry's miracles only one case of demonic possession was recorded, but this sole case was apparently a spirit possession involving a human spirit: a woman named Berta said that she had been vexed by a demon called Symothe for nine years. 'Berta […] a IX annis circiter vexata a daemone cujus nomen Symothe.' 'Miracula B. Henrici Baucenensis,' p. 385.

[3] 'fuit semper continue diu noctuque gravata & vexata a duobus dæmonibus, unus quorum dixit se nominari Uguiccionem de Calavorna, & alius dixit nominari Lupardum di Laddamare.' 'Miracula de S. Zitae Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' p. 518.

village in the Garfagnana valley), exited her only at the shrine of Saint Zita on 13 May. Corsena was also the place of residence of Maria, who became possessed by a demon named Pintello de Controne, Controne being a small village in the region.[4]

To this list, we may also add Palmeria from Sasciana in the Pisa region. She was possessed by twenty-three demons, and cured by the exorcizing powers of Saint Zita. This case is particularly revealing of local attitudes, since Palmeria was apparently specifically asked about the names of these possessing spirits. This sort of question is not mentioned in any other hagiographic material consulted for this research. Palmeria could not provide a firm answer, though. Apparently, she was not surprised or confused by such a question, for she explained that when they were tormenting her she could easily name them, but at that moment she did not remember the names.[5] Both the question and the answer suggest that knowing the tormenting spirit, or rather spirits, since they seldom worked alone, was not atypical and such information could be expected by the local inquisitorial committee.

The names and spirits mentioned above cannot be identified. Likely they were local malefactors who had led wicked lives, caused disorder, and died bad, violent deaths.[6] No explanation for the possession is given. None of the aforementioned cases mention any personal links between the victim and the possessing spirit, except that they were both of local origin. No definition of the nature of the tormentors, whether they were ghosts, demons, or a mixture of both, is given in the register. The people suffering from ghost possession or the tormenting spirits were not from Lucca, the city housing the relics of Saint Zita, but from the surrounding small communities. The Lucchesian demoniacs in this register were possessed only by demons; no names of possessing spirits were mentioned. Most likely, the place of origin, both of the demoniacs as well as the possessing spirits, is of key importance, since they came from communities over which Lucca had recently gained hegemony or was still trying to do so. The motivations for the naming process involved more than just explaining the affliction, since these cases contain political messages. By naming, and hence defaming, these spirits, the participants heightened the power of the heavenly intercessor driving out these malign forces and drew the boundaries of a cultic community around themselves.

By cultic community is here meant the group of people invoking Saint Zita for help, making pilgrimages to her shrine, and hence identifying themselves as

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[4]   'Miracula de S. Zitae Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' pp. 520–3.
[5]   'quos dixit, quod bene sciebat nominare quando vexabatur; & modo dixit, quod non recordabatur de eorum nominibus.' 'Miracula de S. Zitae Notario Fatinello coram testibus excepta,' p. 520.
[6]   Nancy Caciola, 'Spirits Seeking Bodies: Death, Possession and Communal Memory in the Middle Ages,' in *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 66–86.

her devotees. These were people who considered Saint Zita to be their heavenly patron. A cultic community was essentially a devotional and social entity, partly overlapping with geographical and political communities. Many of the pilgrims came from Lucca or communities close by, while many rival cities had their own patrons and their residents would not have turned to Zita for help. A concrete example of how participation in collective devotional practices may have been virtually obligatory and this duty internalized can be found in the canonization process of Nicholas of Tolentino. *Domina* Iohanna was asked by her neighbours to embark on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Nicholas as it was his feast day. She was not planning to do that since she was not ill, as she explained. Immediately her entire left side was stricken with pain and it was not relieved until Iohanna agreed to participate in a joint pilgrimage and reached Tolentino.[7] The collectively performed journey to a local intercessor's shrine was confirmation of belonging to a certain community both in a devotional and social sense; the spheres over-lapped and their construction was mutually reinforcing.

Italy was a hotspot in terms of hagiographical writing, but also in terms of politics. Northern Italy was full of more or less independent urban centres, large and small, which were competing with each other in the fields of commerce, politics, and power relations. Frequently this competition led to open warfare. Strife was by no means lessened by the presence of two of medieval Europe's most important powers: the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. Zita herself was not, however, a particularly political figure, nor was she connected to the power struggles that took place during her lifetime. She was born evidently in 1212 near Lucca, and spent her life as a servant of the prominent Fatinelli family, who, after her death in 1272, controlled her cult. Despite the support of a prominent family and the considerable number of miracles in her register, she was canonized only in 1748.[8]

However, in their afterlives, saints often became emblems of patriotic pride and regional identity, and tools in political propaganda. Hagiography as a rhetorical construction served various needs, one of them being ideological. Hagiography and the practices involved in the cults of saints were closely connected with power relations, and imbued with what can only be termed political messages.[9] Hence, a

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[7]   *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino, testis* CLIX, p. 383.

[8]   Zita paved the way for other servant saints of the later Middle Ages. She was born and lived in Lucca but her cult found its way to late Medieval England, too. Sebastian Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha in England: An Introduction,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 37 (1993): 83–9 and Caroline Barron, 'The Travelling Saint: Zita of Lucca and England,' in *Freedom of Movement in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Peregrine Horden (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), pp. 186–202.

[9]   Felice Lifshitz, for example, argues that boundaries between medieval hagiography and historiography are artificial. Felice Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative,' *Viator* 25 (1994): 96–113. On the interconnection of politics and saints' cults in Italian city-states, see Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City-States* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996). For civic cults, see Gary Dickinson, 'The 115 Cults of the Saints in Later Medieval and Renaissance Perugia: A Demographic Overview of a Civic Pantheon,' *Society for Renaissance Studies* 12 (1998): 6–25, reprinted in G. Dickinson, *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West:*

humble servant could become a powerful political symbol for her hometown. This town, Lucca, was a prosperous mercantile centre in Tuscany and successful in the cloth trade. The area, like the rest of Italy, was torn apart by power struggles. Pisa, the location of the miracles of Gerard Cagnoli recorded some sixty years later, was Lucca's closest rival.

During the twelfth century Lucca had slowly extended its lordship over the smaller communities in the nearby Garfagnana valley. The latter half of the thirteenth century marked the increasing hegemony of Lucca in this area; no rival political forces were permitted to survive, and the local aristocracy faded away.[10] Given this context, these demoniacs and their recoveries thanks to the powers of Saint Zita can be read in the context of local domination: it would seem that the spirits had been opponents of Lucchesian control of the Garfagnana valley. Saint Zita of Lucca expelled the otherworldly malefactors from the surrounding communities, but only if the victims, people from the same communities, submitted themselves to her mercy, humbly invoked her help, and offered an oblation as a sign of gratitude. The registers show that the small villages surrounding Lucca were infested with impure spirits, while the power centre, in the fields of both religion and politics, was endowed with righteous power. These cases strengthened Lucchesian dominion over the surrounding communities in the spiritual field, too.

Another example demonstrating the political content in these kinds of cases comes from the canonization process of Nicholas of Tolentino. Nicholas, too, was of humble origin, an Augustinian friar who died in 1305. He himself was well known for his humility and his ascetic way of life. However, his cult and the way his canonization process was carried out was intimately linked with political strivings on a wider stage and with the local power struggles. Tolentino, the place of residence for Nicholas and centre of his cult, had approximately 1,500 inhabitants at this time. It was thus a city of rather modest size when compared to its neighbours in Marches of Ancona. Nevertheless, Tolentino had an active role in local politics, where conflict and even warfare were endemic.[11]

Central and Northern Italy was divided into political factions which have traditionally been labelled as *guelfi* and *ghibellini*, those supporting the Pope and the Emperor, respectively. Cities in Marches of Ancona, as well as in other parts of Central and Northern Italy, changed sides in this struggle swiftly and frequently. Tolentino was part of the imperial party for a while in the middle of the

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Revivals, Crusades, Saints (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000). See also Marinković and Vedriš, eds., *Identity and Alterity* for the interconnection of politics and the cult of saints.

[10] Chris Wickham, *The Mountains and the City: The Tuscan Apennines in the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 250 *et passim*.
[11] Dante Cecchi, 'Tolentino al tempo di San Nicola,' in *San Nicola, Tolentino, le Marche. Contributi e ricerche sul Processo (a. 1325) per la Canonizzazione di San Nicola da Tolentino*. Convegno internazionale di studi. Tolentino 4.–7. Settembre 1985 (Tolentino: Tipolito A. Pezzotti, 1987), pp. 129–57.

thirteenth century, but returned to the Guelph camp in 1264. Arguably, the opening of the canonization process of Saint Nicholas in 1325 was a favour the pope granted as a reward to a reliable ally. Furthermore, privileged members of these communities used this opportunity to highlight and strengthen their position. Their political adversaries were not interrogated in this hearing, whereas members of elite families in Guelph cities formed the majority of the witnesses in the canonization dossiers. They were given space and time to evoke their miraculous experiences and memories of this heavenly intercessor.[12]

In three miracles, namely those of Philippucia, Salimbena de Visso, and Zola, named spirits can be found.[13] They are better documented than the brief statements in the miracle register of Saint Zita, and we are able to compare diverse opinions given by several different witnesses. Philippucia was a nun in the Cistercian monastery of Santa Lucia in SanGinesio. She herself admitted to being sick, yet she did not mention demons. The other nuns were, however, certain of the diagnosis. The most important factor aiding the categorization may have been her invocation of the Devil, Johannes de Esculo, and Raynaldus Burumforte (Raynaldo de Brunforte).[14] Philippucia was not actually possessed by the said Raynaldo or Johannes, but called forth the Devil to help her since Johannes and Raynaldo were attacking her. Three out of five witnesses to the case mention by name the tormenting spirits;[15] it was an important and memorable detail.

Salimbena de Visso was tormented by Scambio Raynaldo, Vecte Salvo de Podio Vallis, Nicoleta de Paterno, and two others whose names the four witnesses did not remember. Three of them mentioned, however, the above names. According to the witnesses, these men had been robbers and bad men of evil reputation and life. They were burned for their deeds. Only Friar Franciscus de Nursia did not provide any names; apparently, he did not know Salimbena or her case closely. He happened to be at the shrine at the same time, and witnessed how Salimbena was shouting out names all through the night before her cure.[16]

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[12] On the political situation in Marches of Ancona at the time of the hearing, see Pier Luigi Falaschi, 'Società e istituzioni nella Marcha attraverso il processo di canonizzazione di San Nicola da Tolentino (1325),' in *San Nicola, Tolentino, le Marche*, pp. 97–126. On the dominance of elite families from Guelph cities as well as on the political importance of the canonization process of Nicholas, see Lett, *Un procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge* and Didier Lett, 'La parole des humbles comme resource. L'utilisation de la procedure inquisitoire par les postulateurs de la cause dans la procès de canonisation de Nicolas de Tolentino (1325),' in *Agiografia e culture popolari*, pp. 233–40.

[13] As these cases have been previously analysed by Didier Lett (*Un procès de canonization*, pp. 117–22) in the local political context and Nancy Caciola (*Afterlives*, pp. 315–30) in the context of returning dead, I will recount them only briefly and focus on lived religion in the process of constructing the sacred and the political.

[14] The identity of Johannes de Esculo remains unknown; Iohannes de Esculo of Marchesian origin is mentioned as a chief official, *podestà*, in Florence in 1333. Bocaccio in *The Decameron* accused the Florencian rectors of Marchesian origin, who were numerous, of avarice and vile behaviour. Bernardo Carfagna, *Il lambello il monte e il leone. Storia e araldica della città di Ascoli e della Marchia meridionale tra medioevo e fine dell'ancien regime* (Ascoli Piceno: Librati, 2004), pp. 278, 283.

[15] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis XX–XXII and CXXIII–CXXVI.

[16] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis CCII, CCIX–CCXI.

Zola was the only witness to her own case, and she told the commissioners that she was tempted and tormented by two spirits, named Lardo and Traverso. Unlike the participants in Saint Zita's miracles, Zola reported that she knew these men; they had been bad men who had done many evil things in their lives, for which they were burned. The trial had not apparently been official, as according to Zola it took place without sentence or confession. The sight of these burnt men haunted her: she saw them in her mind's eye, and heard them shouting at her: 'We observe anyone walking on the streets!'[17] In a sense, then, it was not only Zola but also the whole community that was under attack by these otherworldly tormentors.

The identity of the malign spirits tormenting Zola and Salimbena cannot be verified. Clearly, they were local malefactors and criminals who had met violent deaths. The fact that they were also identified by their place of residence is of significance. Zola came from the village of Camero (nowadays Cammoro), like the tormenting spirits. The closest cities to this village are Foligno and Spoleto, both important Ghibelline strongholds, as was Fabriano, the closest town to Paterno, the place of origin of Nicoleta, one of the spirits tormenting Salimbena. Podio Vallis is likely Piedivallis, a small mountain village in Umbria. Thus, many of the spirits were more or less directly linked with the political adversaries of the Guelph city of Tolentino.

In Philippucia's case, the tormenting spirits were of noble background. Best attested are the doings of Raynaldo de Brunforte; he had been lord of Brunforte castle, was a known Ghibelline, and waged war against SanGinesio at the end of the thirteenth century. Raynaldo was notorious for violence and robberies. The violence caused by the Brunforte family as well as their political choices, i.e. support for the Ghibellines, was surely enough to demonize him in a context dictated by elite Guelph families such as the canonization process of Nicholas of Tolentino. Johannes de Esculo remains unknown, but most likely he was a companion of Raynaldo. Sister Andrea Iohannis called him a tyrant. This could mean a government lacking legitimacy, a ruler who failed to respect communal institutions, but in a context favourable to the Guelphs it could also mean somebody with Ghibelline connections.[18] Esculo, nowadays Ascoli Piceno, the place of residence of the aforesaid Johannes, switched between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and was ravaged by warfare during this era; its controversial position was exacerbated by a heretical movement.[19]

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[17] 'Videbatur eidem testi ipsos combustos semper in aspectu oculorum videre, et dicere ei: "Nos videmus quicumque transeunt per stratas".' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CVIII, p. 303.

[18] 'fuerant tiranni in terris et commiserant multa mala tempore eorum vite.' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CXXVI, p. 330. Lett, *Un procès de canonisation*, pp. 112–14. *Tyrannus* was also a word used for the Devil in early medieval texts. Bartelink, 'Denominations of the Devil and demons in the Missale Gothicum,' pp. 207–8.

[19] Lett, *Un procès de canonisation*, pp. 118–20. The leader of this heretical, penitential group was Domenico Savi, known as Meco del Sacco. The first inquisition trial against him was held in 1324.

From the other side of the conflict, the actions of these 'bad men' were obviously seen as legitimate during a state of war. Furthermore, violence was part of an approved manifestation of hierarchical position; in particular, chivalric honour could be defended by violence. In medieval thinking, violence was good or bad depending on who was using it against whom and for what purpose.[20] Contrary to traditional views, it has recently been suggested that medieval societies were in fact not remarkably more violent than modern ones; rather, they were violent in different ways. One of the differences is the visibility of righteous violence: it was not shunned or hidden, but displayed.[21] Visibility is clearly demonstrated in Zola's case, as she had memories of the burnings. The righteousness of the actions was questionable, though, if the men were burned without sentence or confession. Visibility is also evident in Philippucia's case, as she gave voice to the frightening collective memories of Raynaldo's aggression during her affliction. These memories seem to have been long-lasting, as Raynaldo de Brunforte had died in 1282 in Pisa. They had been newly refreshed, though, since the descendants of Raynaldo continued to maraud in the area at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[22]

Pier Luigi Falaschi argues that the cause of these possessions was personal sensitivity: tragic deaths continued to distress the minds of these fragile women.[23] It is questionable how fragile a person must be if they are upset by witnessing a burning at stake or some other form of extreme violence, but on a personal level continued distress seems plausible. On a communal level, the cases can also be interpreted differently. If we follow the argument of Jean-Claude Schmitt, the dead do not have any other existence than the one the living imagine for them;[24] the societal structures and functions as well as local culture enabled, facilitated, and even expected the notorious dead to take this kind of role. Through the exorcizing powers of the saint, the victim put the restless spirit to final rest.[25] In addition to this kind of spiritual role, the cases of demonic possession and delivery miracles also enabled the expression of social and political messages; the possessed had an important role in integrating the community. The need for communal cohesion is underlined in both Nicholas' process and Zita's registers, since these

Antonio De Santis, *Ascoli nel Trecento*, vol. I (1300–1350) (Ascoli Piceno: Collana di Pubblicazioni Storiche Ascolane, 1999), pp. 244–5.

[20] The idea that violence was part of medieval culture and mentality derives, for example, from the seminal work of March Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. by L. A. Manyon (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003). On various uses and meanings of violence in the medieval governance, see Warren C. Brown, *Violence in Medieval Europe* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), esp. pp. 25–7.

[21] On the visibility of righteous violence, see Brown, *Violence in Medieval Europe*, pp. 97–9 *et passim*.

[22] Lett, *Un procès de canonisation*, pp. 118–20.

[23] Falaschi, 'Società e istituzioni nella Marcha,' p. 123.

[24] Schmitt, *Les revenants*, pp. 13–16; on apparitions in general, see *passim*.

[25] Caciola, 'Spirits Seeking Bodies,' pp. 66–86.

localities had been, and still were, suffering from political strife which fragmented the communities.

Didier Lett has made a thoroughgoing study of the cult and canonization process of Nicholas of Tolentino, and his interpretation of Philippucia's case is that the nuns suffering the vexations caused by these malign people and spirits represented the Guelph city defending the Church.[26] These cases can, however, also be read from the perspective of lived religion and within the context of creating a cultic community. The delivery reintegrated the victims into the community, but it was not solely an act of individual integration, for in addition, the victims connected their communities with the local power centre by acknowledging the domination of this centre.

The intercession of Zita drove away malign powers from surrounding communities, thus manifesting the supreme position of Lucca. Correspondingly, in the case of Saint Nicholas, Philippucia did not represent the Guelph city or defence of the Church as such, but by her delivery from Ghibelline ghosts manifested the wish of the monastery of Saint Lucia to be integrated within the community of devotees of Saint Nicholas. The nuns, therefore, were submitting themselves to the mercy of a patron representing the Church and the Guelph party. The protective power of Saint Nicholas over the whole community is also manifest in the case of Zola. The malign spirits which claimed their control and supremacy over the area, giving them the potential to observe all traffic in the streets, were replaced by the powers of Nicholas. By placing themselves and their communities under the protection of Saint Zita or Saint Nicholas, the victims were drawing protective boundaries around themselves and their communities. Apparently, this was a need which arose from the local communities themselves, and not a rhetorical construction of the clerical elite. Therefore, these cases illuminate the performative space religion offered to solve problems of various levels.

Miraculous deliveries from malign spirits were always a result of negotiation: the protagonist as well as her or his family and relatives had first to decide what kind of affliction was involved. This is particularly important in cases of demonic possession, since there were no unmistakable signs. In Philippucia's case the categorization seems to have been done by the other nuns, since Philippucia did not mention demons herself. The brief statements in the registers of Saint Zita suggest that demonic possession was a label used and accepted also by the protagonists themselves. After defining the affliction, it was essential to decide what kind of remedy, an earthly doctor or heavenly intercession, was to be sought. And obviously, it was important to carefully ponder which particular saint should be entreated to intercede. After the cure, the incident may have been interpreted in a certain way in the community to better suit its other needs, not to mention the

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[26] Lett, *Un procès de canonisation*, pp. 118–20.

way the expectations of the inquisitorial committee may have shaped the final
records, like asking specifically for the names of the tormenting spirits, as in the
case of Palmeria.

These incidents reflect the political significance of saints' cults in general and
the influence cases of demonic possession had in the field of religion. If religion
created room to manoeuvre, demons were a device within it. Such cases and
pilgrimages as a part of curative rituals contained political messages: these women,
for all these victims were women, and their communities were choosing sides in
political conflicts. These cases should be seen as manifestations of support for
the local political elite linked with these saints. They were not only individual
performances, for they also show how women could take initiative in the fields of
religion and politics. Invocations of these saints and pilgrimage to their shrines
were political statements, and to be selected as a witness to a hearing, especially in
Nicholas' case, was an affirmation of this allegiance.

Constructing Authority: The Case of Birgitta of Sweden

Driving out malign spirits was a 'stress test' for a saint's power, the ultimate proof
of his or her holiness. However, this tool was used with caution, and outside
Italian hagiography, cases of demonic possession are not abundant. There is one
exception, though, which is so remarkable that it merits closer analysis: a consid-
erable number of cases of demonic possession and descriptions of other kinds of
demonic presence can be found in the canonization process of Birgitta, particu-
larly in the cases recorded in Sweden. This is no mere coincidence, or a reflection
of general Nordic beliefs, but rather a conscious choice on the part of the local
clergy, a propagandistic tool in constructing Birgitta's sanctity. The political needs
and available means in the Northern context were obviously different from those
in the Italian peninsula, but cases of demonic possession were nevertheless util-
ized for conveying political messages in both areas.

Cordelia Heβ has shown that the image of Birgitta constructed in the canoniza-
tion process was one of a saint fighting against demons and urging Christians to
confess their sins.[27] This is demonstrated by the demonic activity recorded in the
process and, in addition, by the quantity of punishment miracles. Both of them
are notable characteristics of Birgitta's process.[28] Moreover, these two types are
quite often linked: the demons punish in various ways disrespectful people for
belittling Birgitta's powers or for denigrating her. A case in point, illuminating
many typical features of this process, is Hans Smek, or Smekor, a knight of

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[27] Heβ, *Heilige machen*, pp. 201–4.
[28] See, for example, *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 110, 112 (three cases); 113;
115; 127; also pp. 176–7; cf. p. 558.

German origin serving the King of Sweden, Albert of Mecklenburg. Hans became possessed after reviling Saint Birgitta in 1374, when her relics were being carried back to Sweden from Rome. The case was apparently notorious, as it was mentioned by several witnesses, and recorded in various parts of the process. In many variants of the case, Hans mocked the relics, saying: 'What do I have to do with this old hag (*vetula*) and her remains?' After that he became so crazed that he not only saw a multitude of demons, but also fled to a forest, took off his clothes, kneeled in front of a tree, and whipped himself severely. Later he rode to a church, closed the doors, and flagellated his body and head with sticks and whips, shouting at his friends: 'You accursed robbers and oppressors (*tyranni*), you have spoken just as badly of that blessed *domina* Birgitta, as I have, you are just as deserving of malediction and the company of demons as I am.' When he regained his senses, he promised to make a pilgrimage. First, he intended to make a journey to Aachen, but then he was severely re-afflicted. Only after understanding that he needed to pay tribute to the very same relics he had reviled did he get better. With the utmost humility, he approached Vadstena Abbey and the relics of Saint Birgitta, and then he was cured.[29]

The case of Hans Smek was closely linked to the political context. Constant power struggles between the king and leading aristocratic families were a distinctive feature of the political situation in Sweden during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Birgitta, as a member of nobility, took part in these struggles. Birgitta had been close to Albert's predecessor, King Magnus Eriksson, from his childhood on and had influence at the king's court. Birgitta held a controversial position since neither her influence on the King's policy nor her sanctity after her death were unanimously accepted.[30] The multiplicity of punishment miracles in her process implies that it was not only Hans Smek who saw her as something other than a heavenly patron.

King Magnus had a bad reputation among his contemporaries. This may have been partly due to his tendency to listen to flatterers, and Birgitta, for example, often warned him against them and criticized some of his other actions as well. The King's nickname was *smek*, the same name as that of the German knight, and one which evidently had negative connotations. Probably it means credulous, someone who flatters, or listens to flatterers. It has even been suggested that it

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[29] '"Quid michi de illa vetula et reliquiis suis?" […] "Vos maledicti latrones et tyranni, ita male locusti estis de illa domina beata Brigida sicut et ego et ita digni estis malediccione et demonum societate sicut et ego".' This case was recorded in the local collection, *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 109–10 (quotation) and in the first recording of miracles, pp. 147–8 (quotation) and listed among the *articuli* formed by procurator Ludovicus Alphonsis (p. 26). It can also be found in the depositions of Magnus Petri, Katharina (daughter of Birgitta), Petri Iohannis, Iohannis Petri, and Petrus Olavi (quotation) (pp. 280, 340, 464, 470, 557).

[30] On Birgitta's and the royal couple's relations, see Päivi Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood: The Case of Birgitta of Sweden* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 145–58 and pp. 115–18 for the relationship between Birgitta and her political adversaries.

meant a sodomite, but more likely it did not have such sexual overtones, despite its apparent negativity.[31] If the name bore an intentional implication, it was not likely a reference to the former king but rather to the contemporary political situation. The reign of Albert of Mecklenburg (1364–89) added an ethnic dimension to the ongoing political strife: during this time German nobles played an important role in the Swedish realm and the Swedish aristocracy considered its privileges threatened by them.

The word *tyrannus* had different connotations from those in the context of the Guelph and Ghibelline wars in Italy, but it suggested bad and illegitimate government in the North as well. This detail was mentioned in the local hearing recorded by Vadstena clergy, in the deposition of Petrus Olavi, and in the letter written by Nicholas Hermansson, the Bishop of Linköping. Nicholas was a fervent supporter of the cult of Saint Birgitta and an active participant in Swedish politics. He was elected Bishop of Linköping after two of his predecessors had been exiled and killed, respectively. Nicholas was not on good terms with King Albert: he was elected to the office despite the resistance of the king, and he had to stage a reconciliation with Albert before being allowed to take up his office, even though he had been appointed to it by Pope Gregory XI in 1375.[32]

Vadstena was an important religious, intellectual, and political centre in medieval Sweden. The abbey had received land from the royal couple, Magnus Eriksson and his queen, Blanche, even before Birgitta left for Rome. This, in addition to other donations, eventually made it a rich monastic centre. The abbey served several times as a meeting place for the state council and political negotiations, and the turbulent state of affairs gave it an opportunity to gain authority in the political arena. An abbess was the head of the double monastery but one of the priest brothers acted as a general confessor.[33] Preaching, also to the lay audience, was a crucial part of the Birgittine monastic idea. At the turn of the fifteenth century, the priest brothers were also quite ready to give political advice in their sermons, arguing for their important intermediary position in Swedish power relations and in governing the land. Neither did the brothers shy away from using

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[31] Olle Ferm, 'King Magnus and His Nickname "Smek",' in *Saint Birgitta, Syon and Vadstena: Papers from a Symposium in Stockholm 4–6 October 2007*, ed. by Claes Gejrot, Sara Risberg, and Mia Åkestam (Stockholm: The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 2010), pp. 227–30.

[32] Nicholas' conflicts with the political elite did not end there. The chaplains of his chapter, at the canonization interrogation, saw Nicholas as a successful fighter for the rights of the Church, and saw this as an element of his sainthood. Tryggve Lundén, 'Inledning,' in *Processus canonizacionis beati Nicolai Lincopensis*, pp. 7–29, here pp. 13–26; Herman Schück, *Ecclesia lincopensis. Studier om linköpingskyrkan under medeltiden och Gustav Vasa* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1959), pp. 86–8.

[33] The first nuns and monks apparently arrived at Vadstena immediately after the donation in the 1340s; Birgitta's order (*Ordo Sanctissimi Salvatoris*) was approved in 1370 by Pope Urban V. On political relations, see Tore Nyberg, ed., *Birgittinsk festgåva: studier om Heliga Birgitta och Birgittinorden* (Uppsala: Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen, 1991).

their position of authority in commenting on power relations in the abbey's memorial book.[34]

In the 1370s, during the collecting and recording of Birgitta's miracles, the position of Vadstena was not yet established or secure since the abbey was not dedicated until 1384. It seems, however, that the Vadstena brothers already had an agenda to gain prestige in the field of politics. To describe a noble entourage as *latrones* and *tyranni* may be understood as an accusation of robbing Vadstena or competing in economic wealth and privileges with the abbey and trying to suppress its position and influence. This opinion is also reflected in the Vadstena Abbey memorial book, where German nobles of the time were depicted as birds of prey and tyrannizing the country.[35]

The clerics in charge of recording the miracles, Gudmarus Frederici, Johannes Giurderi, and Katilmundus, were all brothers of Vadstena Abbey. Gudmarus had been Birgitta's chaplain, followed her on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and took part in the expedition which brought Birgitta's relics back to Sweden. Johannes Giurderi (Präst) was a well-known preacher, likened to Chrysostom. He revised the earliest known version of Birgitta's *Revelaciones*.[36] They were appointed by Bishop Nicholas Hermansson and were clearly highly qualified for the assignment, being men of authority and experience. They were not, however, disinterested participants in the matter of canonization. Their strategy was, obviously, to emphasize the sanctity of Birgitta, but also to emphasize the importance of Vadstena Abbey and its priest brothers by demonizing their adversaries. Birgitta was more powerful than demons and sinful persons in particular, but her powers were also superior to opponents within the social hierarchies.[37]

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[34] On brothers' preaching agenda, Roger Andersson and Stephan Borgehammar, 'The Preaching of the Birgittine Friars at Vadstena Abbey', *Revue Mabillon* 8:69 (1997): 209–36. In their sermons, the brothers were even constructing the supremacy of an ideal priest. On the political activity through their sermons, see Louise Berglund, *Guds stat och maktens villkor. Pollitiska ideal i Vadstena kloster, ca 1370–1470* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitets bibliotek, 2003); on the political agenda in the Vadstena diary, Claes Gejrot, 'Diarium Vadstenense: A Late Medieval Memorial Book and Political Chronicle', in *Past and Present in Medieval Chronicles*, ed. by Mari Isoaho (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2015), pp. 131–47. See also Roger Andersson, *De birgittinska ordenprästerna som traditionsförmedlare och folkfostrare* (Stockholm: Runica et Mediævalia, 2001).

[35] 'Tunc aves rapaces preoccupaverunt cacumina moncium. Nam Theutunici tyrannizaverunt in terra multis annis.' *Diarium Vadstenense: The Memorial Book of Vadstena Abbey—A Critical Edition with an Introduction*, ed. by Claes Gejrot (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988), p. 117. The note for year 1365 was added at a later date. After the period of German dominion, the Danes were depicted in a similar negative light.

[36] Berglund, *Guds stat och maktens villkor*, pp. 69–71, 85 and Andersson, *De birgittinska ordenprästerna*, pp. 195–6.

[37] This theme is reflected in Birgitta's *Revelaciones*, in the way she faces ridicule from her political opponents yet in the end, obviously, proves them wrong. Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood*, pp. 115–18. See also Laura Ackerman Smoller, 'Dominicans and Demons: Possession, Temptation, and Reform in the Cult of Vincent Ferrer,' *Speculum* 93:4 (2018): 1010–47, who argues that demonic presence in Vincent Ferrer's miracles responded, among other things, to the Dominicans' rivalry with the Franciscan order.

Other details in the Smek case reinforced the politically laden message: since this German knight was in Sweden and insulted a Swedish saint, he needed to make good his offences within the same realm; no other pilgrimage would suffice. Hence, only the pilgrimage to Vadstena and humiliation in front of Birgitta's relics atoned for Hans Smek's offence. In the local clergy's interpretation, Smek's delivery from malign spirits required self-abasement not only in front of Birgitta's relics but also in front of the Vadstena clergy. This was all the more important since the timing of Smek's offence and subsequent delivery, during the return of Birgitta's relics to Sweden, was not only an event raising much interest and attracting a large audience but also a ground-breaking moment for Vadstena Abbey's position as a sacred space.

The use of demonic presence was a politically laden choice serving many ends.[38] In the narration constructed by the Vadstena clergy, the sacred and the diabolical were in close interaction with each other; this interaction, however, seems to have taken place largely in the field of politics. Both the quantity and quality of cases of demonic possession and punishment miracles in Birgitta's process support the idea of the demonization of an enemy. The recording practices, then, reveal how demonic presence was carefully constructed. Like the named possessing spirits in the Italian material, the recording practices, especially direct quotations, conveyed political messages in the North.

Generally, in canonization processes, only the most important details in validating a miracle or its performer were recorded in direct quotations; they are not a frequent feature or found in every deposition. In Birgitta's process, direct quotations of past speech acts were rarely included except in cases of demonic possession. It was not the invocations, but rather the words of the possessed or the possessing demons, that were considered to be of such significance that they were recorded as direct quotations: they served as a proof of the miracle. For example, in the case of Petrus Gedde a crucial detail was the dog-shaped demon appearing and touching the possessed boy. This ten-year-old boy had lain outside the Vadstena chapel for a week when the demon appeared, saying to his invading associate: 'Come out, dear friend, otherwise we will soon suffer a great scandal,' undoubtedly referring to Birgitta's powers of exorcism, as the boy was lying by the abbey gate. After these words, a huge snake exited through the boy's mouth, transmogrified into a goat, and leapt into the monastery's well.[39] The Archbishop

[38] Miraculous deliveries from malign spirits were also used in sermons after Birgitta's canonization; for example, in a sermon collection from the diocese of Linköping from the first half of the fifteenth century. Uppsala, UB C 75, ff. 124v–131v.

[39] 'Exi hinc, socie carissime, alioquin in brevi maximum scandalum paciemur.' This case was also recorded in the additional hearing organized by the Bishop of Linköping. *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 141–2. The listed witnesses were local clergy and a nobleman 'cum multis alijs personis fidedignis.' See also Stanko Andrić, *The Miracles of St. John Capistran* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), p. 214 for an Italian example of a demon exiting through the mouth in the form of a long, black worm in a fifteenth-century miracle narration about John Capistran.

of Uppsala was in Vadstena at that time, and he asked eye-witnesses to recount their experiences. Present also were many other members of the clergy, who apparently confirmed the account; the names of the witnesses were not provided, though. The detail of the demon's exit appears quite fantastic, but it nonetheless accorded with Thomas Aquinas' thoughts about demonic powers; even humans could be turned into animals, but by imaginary appearance rather than in reality.[40]

To validate a miracle and its performer, a vision of a saint was an important detail; therefore, the words of an appearing saint were often recorded in the mode of a direct quotation.[41] Such examples can be found in Birgitta's process, too. Obviously, not all the witnesses were willing or able to recall the exact words of a saint seen in a vision years, even decades, after the actual incident, but since such words were often mentioned in the interrogation and recorded, it testifies to their importance for both the witnesses and for the inquisitorial committee. Another regular feature to be recorded as a direct quotation was the invocation, even if recording practices varied. The words by which the saint was invoked were of judicial significance as a question concerning them was listed in the *Interrogatorium*.[42] Obviously, the invocations, being prayers uttered in a moment of distress, were manifestations of personal devotion, but direct quotations of invocations also validated the miracle: the intercessor in question was invoked and not any other saint, and she or he was invoked by legitimate means without using magic or superstitious means. Despite the need for fidelity to what was actually said, invocations in the form of first-person speeches could have been a result of the standardization of depositions.[43]

A few examples of invocations recorded as direct quotations can also be found in Birgitta's miracles, yet they, for the most part, lack the aforementioned elements of personal piety, intimacy, and devotion.[44] Longer invocations, in turn, bear clear traces of hagiographic reformulations. The wording of these invocations was likely modified when the Vadstena clerics put the oral testimonies into written form. These invocations were not often testified to by the petitioner him- or

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[40] In this matter Aquinas drew from Augustine, but reformulated his ideas. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, p. 292.

[41] The words of the saint appearing in a vision were often quoted verbatim in later abbreviated versions of the case that were based on the canonization inquiry. See Goodich, *Lives and Miracles of the Saints*, pp. 177–87. On visions and apparitions and direct quotations in depositions, see Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 267–70.

[42] 'Quomodo sciunt…ad cuius invocationem et quibus verbis interpositis'; for transliteration of this ruling, see Katajala-Peltomaa and Krötzl, 'Approaching Twelfth- to Fifteenth-Century Miracles,' pp. 18–19.

[43] On notarial standardization of invocations, see 'Pars tertia' in *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, pp. 334–65. For copying earlier examples in quotations of emotional first-person speeches in the hagiographic genre, Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Saint Foy* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 95.

[44] For example, when Torborgh from Oslo fell through ice into cold water, she cried: 'O Sancta Brigida, salva me!,' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 133.

herself and they seem to have been didactic expressions of Birgitta's saintly qualities.[45] Personal devotion to a saint or previous successful invocations, which are typical rhetorical choices in other parts of Europe, cannot be found. In sum, the relationship with Birgitta seems to have been constructed differently than the petitioner–intercessor relationship in Southern canonization processes. Recorded details of her miracles emphasize hierarchy, both between Birgitta and her devotees, and between Birgitta and the demons. The details of personal devotion and experience were subservient to another message: the clergy's control in validating the sanctity of the candidate.[46]

The need for control can also be seen in an undated episcopal letter from the beginning of the fifteenth century. It urged the clerics to take charge of the cult of an otherwise unknown saint called Jöns. The clerics should take care of the votive offerings, gather proofs for canonization, and not let the laity interfere. The writer claimed that without the clergy's control, the laity would end up risking their souls owing to their superstitious practices. Such a cult should be forbidden, since it would endanger proper order and the Church's privileges.[47]

Another pertinent case which used demons as a propagandistic device in constructing Birgitta's sanctity is the deposition of Petrus Olavi, Birgitta's former confessor. His deposition is extraordinarily long and contains the strikingly high number of thirteen cases that could be labelled as possession or harassment by demons.[48] Petrus Olavi possessed first-hand information of the candidate's life and merits. The importance of his testimony was further heightened since Magister Matthias, another confessor and theological advisor of Birgitta, could not be interrogated at the hearings as he had died in 1350. Obviously, Petrus Olavi was not a disinterested witness. Since he had supported Birgitta and accepted her words and visions as genuine, his own authority and position, or at least his own credibility and reputation, depended heavily on Birgitta's success as a visionary

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[45] On hagiographic reformulations in the canonization processes of Saint Elizabet and Saint Margaret; see Gábor Klaniczay, 'Speaking about Miracles: Oral Testimony and Written Record in Medieval Canonization Trials,' in *The Development of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe*, ed. by Anna Adamska and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 365–95. For an example in Birgitta's process, 'cernens mulier se liberis exorbatam spemque consolatiuam viduitatis sue perijsse dolorosis singultibus dominam Brigidam jnvocabat, ut illa venerabilis vidua, que triginta annis et eo amplius diu ante mortem mariti illo consenciente castitatem seruare vouerat et laudabiliter vixerat et celesti sponso iam inseparabiliter coniuncta vere creditur, desolate et misere vidue succurrere digna-retur, vouens se cum paruulis ad Wastenam peregre profecturam.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 125.

[46] I have analysed the invocation practices in Katajala-Peltomaa, 'Devotional Strategies in Everyday Life,' pp. 21–45 and argued that not only the preferences of the inquisitorial committees, but also the social and geographical context—wealthy urban Italy with short distances versus the rural and economically more undeveloped North with remarkably long distances to shrines—explain the differences between Southern and Northern cases.

[47] The letter was written by an unidentified bishop to Bishop Knut Bosson of Linköping after 1407 and possibly after 1411. It is cited by Beata Losman, *Norden och reformkonsilierna 1408–1449* (Göteborg: Elanders, 1970), p. 59.

[48] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 472–562.

and later as a saint. Female mystics usually needed a male supporter, a confessor or cleric, to encourage them and validate their words and visions; without masculine authority to back up their experiences such women were vulnerable to accusations of delusion, possession, heresy, and, at a later date, witchcraft.[49]

The message Petrus Olavi wished to convey via demoniacs was put forth in the clearest way by a male demoniac in a *miracula in vita*. The possessed, Johannes Styrbjörnsson (Storberni),[50] was a nobleman and a judge (*dominus et justiciarius*). According to Petrus Olavi, when Birgitta and Johannes met, the possessed man said: 'O how dissimilar is your spirit in you from mine in me, but when it pleases yours, I will recover completely.'[51] The discernment of Birgitta's spirit was made clear: she was possessed by the divine spirit and was the opposite of anyone possessed by a malign spirit. The need for discernment of spirits was a persistent trait in approaches to mystics in late medieval culture; a verification of this kind was valued in constructing Birgitta's sanctity. As if the direct quotation of the words of the possessing demon was not convincing enough, the scribes wrote in the margin of the deposition, 'note how the Devil confirms the good spirit in Birgitta.'[52]

Cases of demonic possession were a conscious choice in this process. The Vadstena clergy in particular as well as Petrus Olavi and Nicholas Hermansson were eager to promote an image of Birgitta as the complete moral opposite of the demoniacs, and particularly of the impure spirits inside them: Johannes may have been a judge, but he did, nonetheless, merit his torments by his actions, as the malign spirit proclaimed. Birgitta was also completely different from other women: she was virtuous, had a divine spirit inside her, and had visions of Christ, while other women struggled with their desires and were visited, vexed, and tempted by demons, as will be shown in Chapter 7. What is interesting in this respect, though, is the fact that demonic possession in Birgitta's process was by no means a feminine phenomenon; quite the contrary. Several scholars see demonic possession as an essentially feminine phenomenon, as was noted above, but in Birgitta's dossier

[49] Dyan Elliott (*Proving Woman*, p. 93) links this kind of relationship with marriage, owing to its intimacy and heterosexual hierarchy, while Päivi Salmesvuori (*Power and Sainthood*, pp. 66–70) argues for a more independent role for Birgitta in her relationship with Petrus Olavi. See also Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims*, and Hollywood, ed., *Gendered Voices*.

[50] Johannes was *lagman*, a noble superior judge, like Birgitta's father and husband. The *lagman*'s district was usually a province, in Johannes' case Östergötland. He was obliged to organize assizes annually in all the hundreds in the district. Johannes is identifiable in other contemporary documents as well. In documents dated from the 1330s and 1340s Johannes Storberni sold and donated land and other possessions. SDHK-nr: 3813, 4549, and 4555. The meeting between Birgitta and Johannes is dated to 1361. On the concept of *lagman*, see Mia Korpiola, 'The Deathbed Marriage of Karl Knutsson Bonde: Legitimization by Subsequent Marriage, Property and Family Strategies in Late Medieval Sweden,' *The Legal History Review* 80:1–2 (2012): 129–55.

[51] 'O quam dissimiles sunt spiritus tuus in te et spiritus meus in me, sed quando placuerit eidem spirtui, qui est in te, salvabor perfecte quia ipse me propter infidelitatem et occulta demerita ea tradidit in manum crudelis exactoris.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 537.

[52] 'Nota quomodo dyabolus confiteretur spiritum bonum in domina Brigida inhabitantem.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 537.

around 40 per cent of the victims of demonic harassment were men.[53] Even men of good social standing, like the aforementioned Hans Smek and Johannes, could be possessed. Gender or social standing did not protect those who besmirched Birgitta's honour, or those who were doubtful of her sanctity. The distinctive social marker in these cases was clerical status; the victims were lay members of society, while the men witnessing in these cases were regularly local clerics.

The strategy of using demons was not only limited to those who had personally known Birgitta. Promoting the cult of Birgitta by using cases of demonic presence is exemplified in miracles reported by Gregorius, a priest from Kil, a parish in the area of Närke. He testified to three different miracles in a local hearing ordered by Nicholas of Linköping. Interestingly, all three are cases of demonic possession: Cristina, wife of the *campanarius*, (bell ringer) of Kil church, was possessed for sixteen years; Katherina was possessed after leading dances, *chorea*, during Lent; and Ingeburg, servant of the said Gregorius, was possessed for a month.[54] The symptoms of these demoniacs were not especially revealing, the labelling of these cases as demonic possession seems to have been done in a rather free fashion, and no exact proof for demonic presence was offered or required. The driving force behind the categorization was a deliberate choice and conscious interpretation made by Gregorius; to blame demons for these afflictions suited the expectations of the Vadstena interrogators and Gregorius' own interests as well. Not only did such cases affirm the sanctity of Birgitta; they also enhanced the clergy's position as intermediaries and created a collective identity for them.

In Birgitta's process, the abundance of demons as well as the quantity and quality of punishment miracles were a conscious rhetorical choice for propagandistic purposes. They may have been a particularly serviceable tool since they seem to have also resonated with Nordic ideas of sanctity on a more general level. This is seen in the case of Gudmundus in the Finnish miracle collection of St Henrik.[55]

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[53] One can count approximately twenty-five cases of demonic presence (some only being referred to in short remarks without further detail), with ten having male protagonists. A qualitative analysis supports this gender ratio, as one of the best attested cases is that of Hans Smek.

[54] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 118, 124, 130. The edition of the process does not follow the order of recording faithfully. Gregorius' testimony is scattered in various places, even if he most likely testified only once and recounted all the cases at the same time. Anders Fröjmark suggests that in the first phase, the cases of the local hearing were recorded in a book of miracles in Vadstena, and only a revised version of them ended up in the edition, as the changed order of miracles indicates. Anders Fröjmark, 'Telling the Miracle: The Meeting between Pilgrim and Scribe as Reflected in Swedish Miracle Collections,' in *Miracles in Medieval Canonization Processes*, pp. 131–55.

[55] St Henrik was supposedly the first Bishop of Turku, taking part in the so-called first crusade to Christianize the south-western parts of Finland. This expedition was led by the Swedish king, Erik, and it is dated to the middle of the twelfth century. Nowadays, it is clear that there were Christians in Finland before that time, and the so-called crusade was most likely launched for mundane purposes; to secure taxation privileges and to manifest power. This collection may have been based on a shrine register, but we lack many of the historical details of its composition. The legend includes eleven miracles; it was first compiled at the end of the thirteenth century and revised during the fifteenth century. See Tuomas Heikkilä, *Pyhän Henrikin legenda* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Soceity, 2005).

Gudmundus was a servant of the Bishop of Turku, and the incident took place when he was in Västergötland, Sweden, as a guest of a parish priest. During dinner Gudmundus suggested a toast to Saint Henrik. His host held, however, a different view concerning this former bishop's sanctity, and he laughed at this suggestion and said: 'If he is a saint, let him get angry with me, if he can' (*irascatur mihi si potest*).[56] Later that night the said priest was afflicted: his stomach swelled up and he was in pain. He repented his offensive words, understanding that he had thus faced the anger of the saint. He made a vow to Saint Henrik to always fast on the vigil of his feast day and he was cured. The narration fits well with the general concept of a miraculous punishment: doubting and belittling words were punished with suitable means. In this case the chastisement was not carried out by demons and the blaspheming led to a more lenient punishment, to corporeal pain. The message the swelling conveyed was nonetheless clear: St Henrik was willing and able to punish anyone who traduced his saintly status.

The words of the Västergötland priest seem almost like a challenge to the saint. If he is a real saint, he is able to punish and discipline, like an earthly ruler. In medieval hierarchies, higher status enabled the use of righteous violence against subordinates. Violence was not seen only in negative terms as using power to inflict harm on the bodies, health, or even life of another; it could also be a tool of right and justice, a weapon for the protection of the poor and helpless, and even God's way of aiding the faithful. The ability to use physical force was a mark of privileged or noble status; it was a legitimate part of hierarchal relationships, similar to the social order between parents and children, or to the cosmological order between human and supernatural forces, be the latter malign or benign.[57]

Typically, saints in Northern Europe were of elite origin: bishops, kings, or other members of the nobility.[58] The attributes and abilities of the saints' earthly existence seem to have been valid in celestial hierarchies, as well. The ability to chastise and govern was clearly a sign of elevated social position, but it seems to have been a rather typical feature in constructing Northern sanctity, too. To follow the logic of the aforementioned priest, the ability to get angry with one's subjects was a sign of genuine sanctity, just as it was a sign of sovereignty in earthly hierarchies. In this case, the hierarchy between the petitioner and the heavenly

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[56] *Legenda Sancti Henrici*, ed. by Tuomas Heikkilä, in Tuomas Heikkilä, *Pyhän Henrikin legenda*, pp. 398–419, here p. 418.

[57] Brown, *Violence in Medieval Europe*, esp. pp. 25–7. See also Jonas Liliequist,Violence, 'Honour and Manliness in Early Modern Northern Sweden,' in *Crime and Control in Europe from the Past to the Present*, ed. by Mirkka Lappalainen and Pekka Hirvonen (Helsinki: Hakapaino, 1999), pp. 174–207.

[58] André Vauchez and Robert Brentano draw attention to the different types of sainthood, especially those of Mediterranean culture, and those of Central and Northern Europe. They state that a typical saint in Mediterranean Europe was an ascetic of humble origin. In Central and Northern Europe, on the other hand, the saints were more often of high social status, and held high offices in the Church, the saintly bishop being a typical figure of northern sainthood. On typologies, see Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident*, pp. 163–256, and Robert Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 174–237.

intercessor was established in the end. The sufferer pleaded for mercy, and as a consequence of his deviant actions humbled himself: fasting requires at least a modicum of humility, and perpetual commemoration of the feast day tied the offender to the cult as a devotee.

In Birgitta's miracles, saintly abilities were taken one step further: demons were used as a building brick of sanctity as well as of collective identity by the Swedish clergy, and particularly by the circle around the Vadstena Abbey. The clerics were fighting on God's side against malign powers, demons, and unfaithful and insolent Christians. Enhancing the position of Vadstena Abbey and strengthening collective identity seem to have been motivating factors in such cases. Using demons as a rhetorical tool, the Vadstena clergy were creating and establishing an image of Birgitta as a thaumaturge and her shrine as a healing centre. Simultaneously, they were enhancing their position as intermediaries between the laity and the heavenly intercessor as well as between sinners and demons and, furthermore, enhancing their role as advisors in political matters. The multiplicity of cases of demonic possession was not an expression of the 'not-fully-Christianized-culture' of a backward land distant from the major centres of learning;[59] nor was it an element of lay witnesses' conceptualizations. Indeed, so little attention was given to the lay participants' perspective that it is not possible to draw definite conclusions about whether demons and demonic presence were a way to give meaning and explain life in their view as well. Rather, demons were, in this context, a method for the local clergy to control access to the sacred and participate in the field of politics.

Conclusions

The diabolical had many functions within the miraculous; it could explain personal tribulations and communal chaos. The need for negotiation in establishing demonic presence also enabled other meanings, for instance politically laden messages, to be embedded in such cases. The demonizing of political opponents or certain locations reflected wider societal debates. A rather liberal mode of interpreting demonic presence seems to have been a unifying element between Northern and Southern cases, and thus it follows that politically laden messages can be found especially in these contexts. There are differences, though; distinguishing

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[59] Goodich, 'Battling the Devil in Rural Europe,' p. 139. Finnish church historians in particular have often argued that late Christianization left Finland a quasi-pagan land in the Middle Ages, where heathen beliefs persisted under a thin Christian veneer. On the Christianization of Sweden, Anders Fröjmark, 'La christianisation de la Suède (XIe–XIVe siècles): aspects méthodologiques de la reserche actuelle,' in *La christianisation des campagnes. Actes du colloque de C.I.H.E.C. (25–27 août 1994)*, tome I, ed. by J.-P. Massaut and M.-E.Henneau (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 95–102; for Finland, see Simo Heininen and Markku Heikkilä, *Suomen kirkkohistoria* (Helsinki: Edita, 1990), p. 27 and Kauko Pirinen, *Suomen kirkon historia I. Keskiaika ja uskonpuhdistuksen aika* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1991), pp. 255–7.

elements seem to have been the factors used to identify those demonized as well as the social status of the active agents.

In the Italian context, the place of origin of the named tormentors stands out as a crucial element. The demonic spirits came from communities close to the spiritual power centre, which was the community housing the shrine. Naming the tormentors seems to have been a way to single out the enemies of these communities. This process was linked to geographical boundaries. The rationale was similar whether the question was one of local struggles for hegemony or of strife between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. Furthermore, the signifying element for the active agents was their place of residence, not their social status. Both the clergy and laity of these locations could participate and collaborate in the demonizing process; it was not a top-down process.

The logic seems to have worked differently in the Northern Birgittine context. The dividing line was formed by the status of the participants: it was the clergy who established the interconnection between the sacred and the diabolical. At the same time, they were affirming Birgitta's position in both celestial and secular hierarchies and their own intermediary position in spiritual and social processes that constructed authority. Lay participation was shunned: typically no lay depositions concerning demonic possession were taken, no lay invocations were recorded meticulously, and on a general level, the laity's devotional practices, for example when manifesting gratitude after a miracle, were not emphasized. The demonic was a clerical tool.

The unifying element for both contexts was, however, an identity-building process. Demons served as a means of demonstrating personal or communal subordination to a heavenly intercessor and power-holders associated with the local patron. Cases of demonic possession were a way to draw the boundaries of a cultic community. In the Italian cases, the victims and their nearest and dearest were active in this process, and incorporated themselves and their communities within the protected group. In the North, the active agent was the local clergy; they accepted the lay victims within the cultic community, but only after the latter had amended their ways. Simultaneously, the local clerics were forming, both in a spiritual and political sense, a privileged position for themselves within these protective boundaries. In both contexts, demonic presence reveals, however, the intertwined nature of the sacred and the political.

7

The Need for Control

Demonic Sex and the Feminine

Sexuality is a cultural construction embedded in the customs, practices, and beliefs of an era. Medieval categorizations of sexuality included the division between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and 'natural' and 'unnatural' forms of sex. Hierarchy was also an indispensable element in them; sexuality was seen as a transitive act in terms of hierarchy between active and passive partners. Sex was something someone did to somebody else, as has been argued by Ruth Mazo Karras.[1] Demons were active agents, more powerful than humans, and they could appear in a physical form. They certainly 'did something' physical actively to (usually) passive Christians, and some of their deeds were molestation of a sexual nature.

Sexuality was a complex and gender-specific matter: women were considered to be more lustful than men yet passive in sexual relations. Temptations arising from the flesh were especially associated with femininity, and sexuality in itself could be a threat to the salvation of a person's soul. These ideas of ancient origin acquired a special emphasis in late medieval discussions of spirituality. For example, Nancy Caciola, in her study of the discernment of the spirits in female mystics, argues for the demonization of the feminine in later medieval culture. According to her, 'the feminine becomes a marker not of sex but of demonic uncleanness and sin.' Most recently, Dyan Elliott has also argued that female mystics were increasingly linked to interaction with the Devil. In the minds of observers, the mystics' interaction with the spiritual world included potential interaction with evil spirits, too. Elliott sees an interrelation between the cultural changes involved in the rise of mysticism, interest in demons, and the birth of witchcraft theories. She argues for a continuum; female mystics' visions of mystical marriage with Christ contributed to the idea of women having intercourse with

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[1] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005). On medieval categorizations of sexuality, see also Sharon Farmer, 'Introduction,' in *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, pp. XIV–XV and Karma Locherie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, 'Introduction,' in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Karma Locherie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. IX–XVIII. For discussion on the differences and similarities between medieval and modern sexuality, see Sarah Salih, 'When Is a Bosom Not a Bosom? Problems with 'Erotic Mysticism,' in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 14–32.

spiritual creatures; in other words, witches copulating with the Devil.[2] Similar themes, namely proper ritual practice, nascent demonology, and witchcraft accusations, provide the frames of the discussion that follows in this chapter.

Chapter 6 showed how cases of demonic possession could be utilized to express political messages and support political alliances. This chapter follows a similar lead and scrutinizes the way sexual relations with demons contributed to more general discussions. The interconnection of female sexuality with the demonic was a means to convey aims other than just gender hierarchy or misogyny. The need for proper order, propagation of the sanctity of a saint, and fears that female spirituality could not be controlled were simultaneously expressed. The analysis will start from didactic material, where the presence of demons was abundant. Special attention is focused on exempla in which there is dancing. Dancing was seen as a sensual and indecent activity which could have demonic undertones. It was, nevertheless, an important ritual and a regular part of lay festivities. Accounts on dancing underline gender and other social hierarchies, but they also stress the need for proper ritual practice to prevent chaos and disorder. Exempla with dancing serve as a prelude to the analysis of demonic copulation as they both reflect similar fears. Cases of demons harassing and molesting the unwilling were also a device in the construction of the sanctity of a saint. In a few depositions, women claimed to have willingly invited demons to come to them and into their bodies, implying sexual intercourse. For the victims, demons were a rhetorical resource revealing inner conflict, but cases of demonic presence with sexual undertones also reflect the social dynamics of a community and reveal the fears which the ultimate uncontrollability of inner spirituality caused. The divergence between lay and clerical views comes forth: sexual explanations, either as a cause or a consequence of possession, cannot be found in lay depositions.

Dance, Demons, and Proper Ritual Practice

Since women's corporeality and the temptation their bodies provoked were linked with their fragile morality, these features often intermingled in moralists' logic. A particularly clear path, including bodily practices and sensual incitement leading to sexual promiscuity, seems to have been dances, *choreae*. They were a regular part of communal festivities but, in didactic material, dancing was considered to be a Devil's gateway and closely associated with feminine vices. Festivities and dances were dangerous because of their close link to sensuality and the physical proximity between men and women that they involved; dancing enabled illicit physical contact, and the circling and turning around made people's heads spin

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[2] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, pp. 172, 254, 309; Elliott, *The Bride of Christ*, pp. 241–65. See also Stephens, *Demon Lovers*.

and movement made the cheeks rosy, thus making even unpleasant-looking women appear attractive. According to the moral teaching of the time, the movement in itself was lewd; its intention was only to arouse lust.[3]

Dancing was, however, a ritualistic activity pertinent to religious practices. Sometimes, from early Christian times on, dances were also performed by the clergy as part of liturgical festivities. As a ritual, dancing could be an outlet for emotions and anxieties, or it could serve to create or uphold them. The shared bodily performance increased its intensive, compelling nature for the participants, incorporating spirituality, corporeality, and communality in the experience. The gestures and movements were a manner of communication: it was crucial who danced, how, when, and in what company. By way of symbolic communication, dancing also had the ability to reinforce or challenge existing hierarchies and strengthen or demean control. In didactic treatises of the late Middle Ages, dances were sometimes associated with illicit religious practices, and excessive lay dancing could be linked to possession or witchcraft. Dancing was increasingly seen as a transgression, a challenge to clerical authority signifying and producing alterity.[4]

Dancing in churches and churchyards in particular was criticized by the clergy, but Nancy Mandeville Caciola suggests that for the laity ring dancing, particularly in cemeteries, was a widespread custom symbolizing death and renewal and hence was closely associated with funerary and fertility rites. Kélina Gotman sees the early references to 'choreomania' as a battle for power between lay dancers and the ecclesiastical elite.[5] For the laity, then, the question was also about control; the aim could have been to secure the community's survival and maintain harmony with otherworldly beings. Dancing was also a regular part of many secular festivities, which aimed at enhancing stability, social ties, and hierarchy.[6]

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[3] Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques*, p. 217. Casagrande, 'The Protected Woman,' p. 85, and Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 159.

[4] Kélina Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 56–66; Denis Collins and Jennifer Nevile, 'Music and Dance,' in *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Late-Medieval, Reformation, and Renaissance Age*, vol. 3, ed. by Andrew Lynch and Susan Broomhall (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 49–67; Alessandro Arcangeli, *L'altro che danza. Il villano, il selvaggio, la strega nell'immaginario della prima età moderna* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2018); Paul Spencer, 'Introduction,' in *Society and the Dance*, ed. by Paul Spencer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1–46. On various feasts from late antiquity to the post-Reformation era including liturgical and semi-liturgical dance performed by the clergy, see Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). Cf. Russel, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, pp. 58–9, 61, 74–5, 96, 185 on dancing as a remnant of pre-Christian tradition and prelude to witchcraft.

[5] Caciola, *Afterlives*, pp. 249–51. Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder*, p. 61. She argues for the fear of uncontrollability and instability as the essence of 'choreomania,' disruptively moving bodies into and within the public space, in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarly interpretations.

[6] Collins and Nevile, 'Music and Dance,' pp. 49–67. Elizabeth A. R. Brown and Nancy Freeman Regalado, 'La Grant Feste: Philip the Fair's Celebration of the Knighting of His Sons in Paris at Pentecost of 1313,' in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 56–86, esp. p. 71 and MariAnna Jentzen, *Symbolic Expression in Renaissance Florence: The Observances of Saint John the Baptist* (Göteborg: University of Göteborg, 1992), pp. 197–211.

Conflict over proper ritual practice is clearly discernible in a case recounted by Etienne de Bourbon. He told of a certain girl who, on feast days when others went to hear sermons, danced and sang and invited other friends to the gathering. She sang so loudly that the preaching nearby was disturbed and she refused to amend her ways. This took place several times and finally she was taken by the Devil. She was severely punished; her body was covered with pustules so that she looked infected and corrupted. Her friends took her to various shrines but in vain. Only after she visited the friars whose preaching she had disturbed, and they prayed for help, was she delivered from the possession. Her infirmity did not, however, cease until she had made a full confession of her sins. She was found not to be in any mortal sin but was advised of the gravity of her misdemeanour: it was a grave sin to inhibit the word of God from being preached. Once she realized this, humbly confessed her sins with tears, and promised never again to lead a *chorea* or impede the word of God, she was cured.[7]

Her moral deviance was twofold. The dancing girl enticed others to sin and endangered their salvation and, evidently more importantly, she challenged the proper hierarchy by opposing a preaching friar. Her skin revealed her moral status: she was covered with ulcers, just as her soul was covered with moral pus. The demonic possession was linked with her refusal to accept hierarchal relations: she was delivered when the friars forgave her transgression. Yet the physical illness, the abscesses, were cured only after she had recovered from the moral infirmity by confessing her sins. Thus, the demonic possession as a punishment did not originate from the sensual aspect of dancing but rather from her refusal to accept the authority of the friars and from her challenge to proper religious practice. However, on other occasions Etienne de Bourbon clearly stated that demonic possession or obsession was a result of the sin of dancing: God gave permission to demons to vex dancers because of the sinfulness of the act.[8]

Dancing was seen as a symbol of disorganization and chaos and was linked with demonic activity. This is stressed also by Caesar of Heisterbach: an indignant *vetula* was punished by death within three days from leading a *chorea* after a preacher had forbidden her to do so. According to Caesar, the occasion was an annual feast, the day of Apostles Peter and Paul, which was celebrated by music and dancing. The preacher, however, having the licence and authority to preach, approached the crowd, reminded them that such a frivolity would render them to the Devil, and started to preach. Some of the dancers stopped to listen to him, while others were reluctant to quit their dancing. Worst of them was an old woman, stupid and proud as Caesar put it, who continued to sing and dance

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[7] Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques*, p. 101.
[8] 'Item vexat homines, Deo ei permittente, propter peccatum chorearum.' Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques*, p. 217.

around the priest.[9] The contesting of clerical authority was even more marked than in the case of Etienne de Bourbon, and so was the punishment. After the sudden death of the sinner, the moral lesson was clear: resisting clerical authority led to damnation.

Examples of dancing which point in the same direction can also be found in canonization processes. Katherina, a widow from Örebro, Sweden, was possessed after she led a *chorea* during Lent. She had broken the regulations proposed by the clergy by not observing abstinence during Lent and she even took a leading role in the deviant behaviour. The wording, immodest dances (*choreas minus honestas*), was undoubtedly chosen by the two priests testifying in the case and the Vadstena clerics recording it.[10] These details served to underline the moral message of such disobedience.

From the clerical perspective, the crucial feature in these cases was hierarchy: the ability of the clergy to stay in charge and to prohibit transgressions. The lay practices were here projected as opposing forces to clerical hierarchy, and proper ritual practice was at stake in them. This is encapsulated in an exemplum concerning Christmas-time festivities. People leading a *chorea* were disturbing the holy mass *in vigilia natale domini* and did not obey the orders of the priest. As a result, a drought hit the area as the priest had prophesied; it did not rain for a whole year and a famine occurred.[11] Only the intervention of the Archbishop ameliorated the situation: he absolved the people of their sins and reconciled them in front of the altar. The need for communal participation, under the control of the clergy, was likewise affirmed. The leaders of the *chorea*, a woman and two men, were examined, but the whole congregation had to spend three nights at the church.

Here, as in the exempla of Caesar, the proper way to celebrate the feast was a crucial question. Caesar depicted the priest disrupting the traditional way of celebration: singing and dancing were a communal tradition on the feast of Peter and Paul (29 June). This day belonged to a series of midsummer festivities and fell close to St John the Baptist's Day (24 June). These festivities were notable for fertility rituals, which often included dancing.[12] Ultimately, the question in these cases was not one of women's corporeality or promiscuity but of authority and control: who was to decide and define proper ritual and proper religious practice.

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[9] Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, IV, 11; see also X, 10, for a woman afflicted anew by demonic possession after she disobeyed a cleric who commanded her to stay at a shrine for thirty days after her recovery. On dancing on feasts of the liturgical year, see also Constant J. Mews and Carol J. Williams, 'Music and Dance', in *A Cultural History of the Emotions in the Medieval Age*, vol. 2, ed. by Juanita Feros Ruys and Clare Monagle (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 49–63.

[10] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 124. See also 'Summarium virtutum et miracula B. Ambrosii Sansedonii', p. 236 for a girl becoming possessed while dancing at a wedding.

[11] 'toto anno pluviam non cecidit super eos ut fames ut siti ut vestimenta eorum sint atterita.' Uppsala UB C 218, f. 168v. See also Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder*, p. 61, for another medieval exemplum of dancers brawling in a churchyard during Christmas and being cursed by the bishop to dance the whole year as a punishment.

[12] See Jentzen, *Symbolic Expressions* and Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder*, pp. 60–3.

Disobedience towards clerical authorities was demonized; abhorrence of feminine sensuality and corporeality was an instrument to achieve this goal.

At its worst, dancing could turn out to be a mockery of Christian values and practices. Jacques de Vitry, for example, claimed that dancers, particularly the woman leading a *chorea*, were like a cow with a bell: the sound informed the Devil of their whereabouts. Later, in *Scala Coeli* John Gobi summarized the dangers of dancing: it was pleasing to the Devil and an insult to God; it was a sign of vanity and the beginning of damnation.[13] In a mid-fifteenth-century text, the singing and dancing in festivities was even referred to as *psalterium diaboli*: 'When Christ on the cross stretched his arms only with pain, you do it in the dances just out of vanity; he bent his head on the cross, you hold yours high; he was unable to move on the cross, while you sway your body around in circles; he prayed, you insult.'[14]

From this mockery of Christ's passion, the leap to diabolical rituals at a witches' Sabbath does not seem very far: both depicted a horrid inversion of the desired proper order. Dancers did not verbally summon demons, but, according to clerical authorities, bodily gestures communicated an association with them. Furthermore, by improper ritual practice, the dancers deliberately positioned themselves as opponents of the clergy; that is, against the righteous and on the side of malign forces. The body, especially the female body, served as a site of religious and cultural values, therefore it could also reinforce or challenge them. Chaos and disorganization as well as proper order and harmony, and dancing female in their making, were, however, in the eye of the beholder. That the symbolic message of these rituals was targeted at the divine and at the social was common to both clerical and lay perspectives, but whether proper ritual practice was meant to first and foremost ensure correct hierarchal relations or the fecundity of the community was a matter of dispute.

Involuntary Sex Acts and the Construction of Sanctity

Demons were spiritual creatures and did not have a temporal body or a fixed sexual identity. Nevertheless, they could appear in a tangible form and also have

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[13] Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla*, CCCXIV, p. 131. See also Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques,* pp. 461–2, 398–9; cap. 270, 226; Thomas de Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus*, pp. 54–55, and Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, IV, 11. Physicians could, however, recommend dancing and music for the maintenance of health. See, for example, Joutsivuo, 'How to Get a Melancholy Marquess to Sleep?,' pp. 21–46 and Iona McCleery, 'Wine, Women and Song? Diet and Regimen for Royal Well-Being (King Duarte of Portugal, 1433–8),' in *Mental (Dis)Order*, pp. 177–96. On John Gobi, Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps. Essais d'anthropologie médiévale* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), pp. 156–7.

[14] UB C 218, f. 203r; see also f. 168v: 'corearum cantus est diaboli psalterium.' In his sermon to virgins also Jacques de Vitry connected women's songs and dances to diabolical rituals. He saw such acts as mimicking religious ceremonies, and depicts the woman leading a chorus as a chaplain of the Devil. Cited in Casagrande, 'The Protected Woman,' p. 85.

physical contact of a sexual nature with Christians. In the medieval didactic material, *incubi*, demons in a male form, were thought to harass unwilling women; sex with demons could be linked with personal sin, but not usually with *maleficium* or a pact with the Devil. This changed only later. Heinrich Kramer, the author of *Malleus Maleficarum*, for example, admitted that he did not know whether *maleficae* of earlier times copulated with demons as did the witches of his day. He was aware that earlier authors usually considered that *incubi* molested unwilling women.[15] Both men and women could fall prey to demons in human form. However, in canonization processes and local inquiries, the examples, even implicit ones, of actual copulation with demons were rare and involved only women, even though in didactic material *succubi*, demons in a female form, could also harass men.

In the inquiry into the miracles of Robert, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, carried out in 1319, an adulteress was punished by possession, which took place in the form of a rape.[16] The case was based on an interrogation, and the witness to the case was a certain Jacobus de Burne, a servant of the late Archbishop. The deposition was given in front of a panel of friars, monks, and other clerics. A public notary, Thomas Befiles, recorded the deposition in *formam publicam*. Nevertheless, the tone of this case is closer to a didactic exemplum than to a deposition in a judicial hearing. The protagonist, for example, remains unnamed; she is only *quaedam mulier*.

This *miraculum in vita* took place in Essex when the Archbishop was visiting London. The said woman was accused of adultery and called in front of a clerical tribunal. Apparently, there was a general *fama* for her adultery, but she declined to confess her guilt and deliberately perjured herself, or so Jacobus de Burne claimed. The following night, when she was lying naked in her bed, she saw how the roof of her house opened and an animal descended onto her bed and entered her stomach violently (*quoddam animal in lectum suum descendit, et in ventrem ipsius mulieris veraciter intravit*). The scene, the bed and her nakedness, further underlined sinfulness and depicted an image of copulation, even if unwilling, with a malign spirit.[17]

This malign creature tried to lift the woman up into the air, but she made the sign of the cross. Because of the benediction the evil spirit put her down, but remained inside her in her stomach. During the following week she felt the sensation of a horrible stench inside her; she could not taste food and the stench made

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[15]   Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, p. 46. See Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, III, 7, 8, and 9 for *incubi*. Women in these cases were seduced, corrupted, and later terrified of their deeds, but were not forced into demonic sex.

[16]   'Inquisitio de miraculis Roberti archiepiscopus Canturensis', pp. 489–90; see also pp. 487–8 for other cases of women labelled as *furiosa*.

[17]   Nakedness, particularly in private invocations, could also signify the humility of the petitioner, but such details can be found in men's depositions only. 'ipse nudus lectum exiens genuflexit se in terram et reconmendavit se <et> devovit humiliter et instanter Deo et Beate Clare de Montefalco,' *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, testis LX, p. 318.

her want to die rather than endure it any longer. Therefore, she once again approached the revered Archbishop of Canterbury and confessed her previous sin in front of the clergy and a large group of laity. It seems that when first summoned in front of the ecclesiastical tribunal she was expected to do public penance for her misdemeanour, but she refused to admit her guilt. Public confessions were, even after the Fourth Lateran Council, used as a means of discipline in fornication cases. Non-solemn public penance was imposed by priests, and this may have been the intention in the first place. Solemn penance was the prerogative of a bishop, and once this woman had failed in her first attempt to make good her misdemeanour, a more severe chastisement was due. Both solemn and non-solemn public penance included the public confession of sins and, typically, public penitential acts such as a penitential pilgrimage. They were used as punishment for people of ill-repute; solemn penance was for those laymen who had scandalized the entire town.[18]

Public humiliation was an essential element of solemn penance; in this case it was only partly put into effect by clerical officials in a public confession of sins. Supernatural forces carried out the humiliation; the horrible stench, being linked with pollution, was obviously a sign of impurity caused by sin and an unclean spirit.[19] Sensory elements were significant in constructing the sacred and diabolical; a sweet smell was a typical sign of a person's sanctity and a foul stink marked demonic presence.

The possessed woman's position was also made visible to others since she was taken to the Archbishop in a cart, which had a particularly powerful implication of public display. Travelling by cart could have been a sign of resistance or of an incapacity to walk, as in cases of raving mad or paralysed people. Such a mode of conveyance implied a state of public notoriety and shame as well, since it was also used in the punishment of criminals.[20] It is quite obvious that the witness and the notary recording the case acknowledged this element and utilized it to further underline the moral message of the incident, since no special reason for this means of transport was given; this woman was not out of her mind, physically incapacitated, or tied up. The cart emphasized her deviant behaviour, marginal position, and humiliation. Humiliation as well as collective disgust and moral impurity were made very concrete in the narration; they were made manifest by seeing her travel, hearing her confession, and sensing the horrible stench. These details emphasized the public nature of the event and the part played by concrete sensory elements in constructing and solving the case. Simultaneously, they

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[18] Public confessions and penance were inflicted on sinners from all layers of society. Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners, Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 21, 113, 116, 117.

[19] Stench linked with impurity reflecting religious otherness was a typical element of religious polemic among Christians, Pagans, Jews, and Muslims from late antiquity on. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*.

[20] Craig, *Wandering Women*, pp. 198–9.

reinforced the hierarchical position of the clergy. The community's collective consideration of cause or categorization, not to mention the victim's perspective, were left unrecorded.

According to Jacobus de Burne, the Archbishop absolved the woman after her public confession and gave her and her lover penance. The benevolence and generosity of the Archbishop was given great weight: he further asked the crowd present to pray for the penitent woman. After this, the woman returned to her home and the demon left her. The annulling of her sins was done by contrition, confession, and absolution given by the Archbishop. The purifying was also emphasized by tears and crying. Typically, crying and tears were linked with contrition and confession, and in this context crying held a positive value, also for men. To cry because of one's sins was a sign of contrition for evil deeds and considered to purify the soul. The positive connotations originated from the Sermon on the Mount and were also reflected in the depositions of the laity; tears were an element of proper ritual while invoking a saint.[21]

Typically, however, tears were linked with the penitent sinner, but in this particular case 'with tears' (*cum effusione lachrymarum*) refers to the absolution given by the Archbishop. This is not the only such case in the records; quite the contrary. Friar Johannes testified that Robert used to celebrate the mass as if he was physically in front of God; his sincere devotion and effusion of tears was so great that the linen cloth at the altar became damp.[22] In Robert's case, then, the *gratia lacrymarum* was not only devotional weeping as contrition for (one's own or others') sins. It was a virtue as such, for, in addition to being a sign of contrition, tears could also be considered a divine grace. His gift of tears was clearly a mystical phenomenon and understood as a *charisma*.[23] The tears of Robert of Canterbury were the miracle-working power in this case; they purified the sins of the fornicator and cleansed the stench of pollution. They seem to be the only manifestation of the *virtus* of Robert of Canterbury in this particular case: he was not the one who sent the demon as a punishment for moral wrongdoing. He did not even miraculously cure the afflicted woman. Robert of Canterbury acted only as a medium through which divine justice worked. Nevertheless, he was clearly presented as being the opposite of the sinner he was absolving.

In this case sexual sins were punished appropriately by a sexual act. Tellingly, the one to fall prey to demonic assaults and further pollution was the woman and not her lover. She is the one to carry the weight of communal disgust in the form of a putrid stench and personal shame by public display of her position. This reflects clerical ideas about women's promiscuity; they were seen as responsible

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[21] Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, p. 209. For tears in invocation rituals, see Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 87–9.

[22] 'Inquisitio de miraculis Roberti archiepiscopus Canturensis,' p. 488.

[23] See also Nagy, *Le dons des larmes*, pp. 22–4.

also for the lust they aroused in others, and lust and the demonic, in turn, were closely connected. In the early modern era, accusations of witchcraft could be directly linked with previous moral transgressions; both men and women with a reputation for sexual misbehaviour were more readily labelled as witches. Sometimes fornication was the main moral offence clearly linked with witchcraft accusations, but the significance of previous illicit sex acts varied from one area to another.[24] However, the moral lesson in this case was not only the danger of illicit sexuality but yet again the consequences of resisting clerical authority. This woman was not possessed solely for her adultery; the demon attacked her only after she failed to confess her well-known sin in front of a church tribunal and committed perjury, thus undermining the Church's authority.

Sexually harassing demons were particularly active among people resorting to the aid of Saint Birgitta, at least if we are to trust Petrus Olavi, since many cases can be found in his deposition. He claimed that several women were vexed by uncontrollable lust or forced by an *incubus* to have sexual relations. The number of such cases is quite extraordinary in his deposition and in this process in general, since copulation with demons, whether willing or as a form of punishment as in the previous case, is strikingly rare in canonization processes. One of the victims was a servant of Birgitta, who was forced to separate from her husband by a priest because of an unacceptably close degree of kinship. She was bitter (*amaritata*) about the annulment of her marriage and vexed by lust. Birgitta tried to console her by reading the Dialogues of Gregory the Great, and she made others pray for her, too. These measures worked, since the people present saw how a black demon exited from between her breasts. This *spiritus fornicationis* exited with a horrible stench, making its impurity clear. The exit route from between the breasts further emphasized the carnal nature of the relationship. Afterwards the servant found peace and was even horrified to hear mentioned or see her ex-husband; the illicit yearning had turned into an aversion because of the intervention of Saint Birgitta.[25]

[24]   Oscar Di Simplicio, 'Giandomenico Fei, the Only Male Witch: A Tuscan or an Italian Anomaly?,' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 121–48. Robin Briggs ('Male Witches in the Duchy of Lorraine,' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 31–51, esp. p. 33) gives examples of sexually misbehaving men in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lorraine but argues for the rarity of such cases, while Rita Voltmer ('Witch-Finders, Witch-Hunters or Kings of the Sabbath? The Prominent Role of Men in the Mass Persecutions of the Rhine-Meuse Area (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries),' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 74–99, esp. p. 88) sees such behaviour as a typical reason for accusations in the Rhine-Meuse area. Jonathan Durant ('Why Some Men and Not Others? The Male Witches of Eichstätt,' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 100–20, esp. pp. 109–10) argues that crimes like fornication made both men and women vulnerable to further accusations of witchcraft, but other disagreements and an argumentative character seem to have been more significant. On accusations against men, see William de Blécourt, 'The Werewolf, the Witch, and the Warlock: Aspects of Gender in the Early Modern Period,' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 191–213.
[25]   *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 535.

According to Petrus Olavi, another woman, unnamed like the aforementioned servant, was harassed by a demon, had sex with an *incubus*, and a son was born of this relationship. Demons as spiritual creatures did not have carnal bodies or weaknesses that arose from the flesh, such as lust. Intellectuals of the era generally agreed that demons could assume a human body or any corporeal form they wished. Generally it was thought that this body was made of air, but it was real and tangible enough to copulate with humans. This is also what Petrus Olavi argued.[26] Medieval theologians disputed whether humans could procreate with such non-corporeal creatures. Some authors, like the early Bible commentators, saw the 'Sons of God' in Genesis (Gen 6:2–4) as the offspring of angels and mortal women. Then there was the famous legend of Robert the Devil, told by Etienne de Bourbon. Robert was a son of Satan born into the Norman ducal family thanks to his mother's pleas. God did not respond to her prayers to have a son and she turned to the Devil instead, and so Robert was born.[27] Caesar of Heisterbach argued that the Huns and also Merlin were born out of intercourse between women and demons, but went on to explain that demons collected the semen that was spilled *contra naturam* and used it for fertilization.[28] At the end of the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas and others following his lead argued that only human semen could fertilize a woman; a demon could transform itself first into a *succubus* and have sex in female form with a man; after that he could use this semen in an *incubus*' form.[29]

As a prior of the Cistercian monastery in Alvastra, Petrus Olavi was likely aware of some of these generally accepted ideas about the nature of demons, but he nonetheless argued for the idea that demons were able to procreate with humans. According to him, the demon assumed a body from the air to exercise his malice with the aforementioned woman. A boy was born from the semen of both father (i.e. the demon) and the mother. Petrus Olavi did not follow the Aristotelian idea of conception, in which women were unable to produce seed and the mother only offered matter (via menstrual blood) to the foetus, the form (via

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[26] 'nam diabolus, quia spiritus est, assumit sibi corpus de aere,' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 542.

[27] Etienne de Bourbon recorded the earliest known version, but the story was repeatedly told in various vernacular versions in the later Middle Ages. Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques*, pp. 145–6. Another similar story in medieval romance was Sir Gowther, a son of an *incubus*. After a massive number of bad deeds he repented, did penance, and was eventually venerated as a saint after his death. Barbara Newman, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), pp. 49–51. Claims of demonic descent were used by elite families to gain prestige, Jacques Berlioz, 'Pouvoirs et contrôle de la croyance: la question de la procréation démoniaque chez Guillaume d'Auvergne (vers 1180–1249),' *Razo. Cahiers du Centre d'études médiévales de Nice* 9 (1989): 5–27.

[28] Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, III, 12. See also Jenni Kuuliala, 'Sons of Demons? Children's Impairment and Belief in Changelings in Medieval Europe (c. 1150–1400),' in *The Dark Side of Childhood*, pp. 79–93, esp. 83.

[29] On these theories, see, for example, Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 64–5 and 70–3; Elliott, *The Bride of Christ*, pp. 238–41; Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*, pp. 62–3.

semen) coming from the father. Petrus seems to have agreed with the Galenian idea of two seeds, one male and one female, being necessary for conception.³⁰ Nevertheless, the Devil had more influence on the boy since he was not properly baptized, but baptized by ignorant old women (*vetulae*) in the name of the Trinity (*per verba Trinitatis*).³¹ He undoubtedly meant a baptism carried out by women attending the birth. Legitimate as such baptisms were, they nevertheless caused suspicion and even anxiety among the clergy, as was also reflected in Petrus Olavi's statement. Baptism was a sacrament and it was perturbing to leave it in the hands of the laity and laywomen in particular.

Daily life with the demon-boy was evidently harsh; the mother used to quieten her then three-year-old son by sprinkling cold water upon him, since nothing else helped with his restlessness. Cold water, especially being submerged in it, was a recommended cure in medieval exorcism manuals and it was still practised during the early modern era as well.³² The reason for the boy's condition, which was that his mother had been having sex with a demon for a long time and was hence being justly punished, was revealed to Birgitta in a vision. The situation improved after Birgitta advised the said woman to do as Christ had informed her: the boy was properly baptized and the mother made her confession. She pleaded for the mercy of the Virgin Mary and Christ. Afterwards the Devil did not torment her anymore and the boy was cured.

According to Magister Petrus Olavi, Birgitta's dealings with *incubi* and molested women did not end here, nor were they only a specialty of the Swedish realm. The most widely cited case of Birgitta's exorcizing powers during her lifetime was the recovery of Picziolella. There are four depositions in this case; in addition to Petrus, also Alfonso, former Bishop of Jaén, *dominus* Nicholaus, the Count of Nola in Campagna, and Magnus Petri, a priest from the Linköping diocese testified.³³ Like Petrus, Alfonso had been close to Birgitta; he helped her to get papal approval for the rule of her monastic order and revised Birgitta's

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³⁰ Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference*, pp. 24–34.

³¹ 'nam diabolus, quia spiritus es, assumit sibi corpus de aere, in quo lasciuiens ostendit se visibilem exercendo cum illa femina quasi luxuriose maliciam et nequiciam suam. Et licet puer de semine patris et matris est natus, maximam tamen diabolus potestatem in ipso habet, quia baptismate vero renatus non est, sed eo modo baptizatus est, quo mulieres ignorantes per verba Trinitatis baptizare solent.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 542. In the margin it was noted 'quia per mulierem vetulam et non rite baptizatus fuit.'

³² Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 51. On submerging as a cure for demoniacs in early modern Scotland, see Joyce Miller, 'Towing the Loon: Diagnosis and Use of Shock Treatment for Mental Illnesses in Early Modern Scotland,' in *Dämonische Besessenheit*, pp. 127–43. On submerging in a well as a healing ritual for other ailments, see Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons*, pp. 100–2. According to Bernardino of Siena, these rituals had superstitious or pagan connotations, and he had this well demolished and a chapel for the Virgin Mary built in its place.

³³ *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 234, 273, 388, 538. This case was also listed in the *articuli*, the list of questions concerning the life and miracles of Birgitta, pp. 23–4. Domina Francisca Papazura was also interrogated about the matter but she replied briefly using hearsay. *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 455.

Revelaciones for publication. Both Petrus and Alfonso promoted the fame of Birgitta's sanctity.[34]

Picziolella was an elderly widow and a vassal of the said Nicholaus. She was of good repute, and according to Nicholaus, not in any way attractive. Regardless of her age, good reputation, and physical appearance in the eyes of mortal men, a demon harassed her nearly every night. Alfonso even claimed that she had carnal intercourse with the demon.[35] Picziolella did her best to avoid it: she closed the door more firmly, asked women neighbours to spend the night with her, confessed her sins, and took the Eucharist, all in vain. In desperation Picziolella resorted to magical incantations, and a priest inserted in her hair a magical item (*breve caracteribus figuratum*), which likely referred to a textual amulet to ward off evil. *Breve* was brief text of letter size, appearance, and format. *Caracteres* were amulet charms containing verbal incantations or signs, symbols, or letters which were used in a magical way. *Cartas caracteribus* could also refer to learned magic, to special signs that were thought to possess the power to conjure demons and to force them to obey. Instructions for textual amulets could be found in secular texts, such as herbals and remedy collections, but often the people who made these notes were priests, as they knew Latin. However, the magical efficacy of textual amulets depended more on the power of the words than on clerical authority or involvement.[36]

After the textual amulet, the demonical visits were reduced but not stopped. Only after Picziolella's visit to Saint Birgitta was she liberated. Immediately, Birgitta uncovered the magical items, took them away, and made Picziolella confess all her sins. Nicholaus and *dominus* Petri Olavi argued that Picziolella resorted to magic only as a last resort, while *dominus* Alfonso implied that she had done this already in her youth. Thus, she may have been partly to blame herself. Church sacramentals were a generally approved method to ward off demonic harassment, and Christians should have been ready to suffer any affliction rather than resort to magic.[37] Interestingly, here the one practising the magic, even if a protective form, was a priest. If we are to believe her former confessors and the people who had written her life and revised her *Revelaciones*, Birgitta was purer than the rest of her gender, but it seems that she was also more pious and orthodox than at least some clerics.

It was no coincidence that the magical items were placed in Picziolella's hair; the interconnection of long hair, femininity, and illicit sexuality was clear

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[34] Salmesvuori, *Power and Sainthood*, pp. 14–15.

[35] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 388.

[36] In the margin was noted 'Nota hic de illis qui breue et cartas caracteribus scriptas portant in collo quam supersticiosum sit.' *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, p. 538. The practice was not clearly labelled as magical. On textual amulets, Skemer, *Binding Words*, pp. 13–18, 169–71, 183. Clerical amulet preparation was common in late medieval Italy. Often these 'magical slips' were made of a special type of parchment, which was prepared by following a complicated set of procedures and rituals. Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell*, pp. 56–7.

[37] Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*, p. 210.

in medieval thought. Long, loose hair was thought to entice men to lust, and the precious ornaments which women used to adorn their hair drew much criticism for being a display of vanity. Some late medieval preachers even claimed that combs and hair pins were diabolical inventions. If not downright diabolical, combs were intimate, erotic objects used in beautification, and linked with sexuality.[38] While many authors thought that demons did not have flesh and so were not driven by sexual desire to women, William of Auvergne, writing in the thirteenth century, claimed that the beauty of women's hair provoked lust in *incubi*. The fifteenth-century demonologist Johannes Nider claimed that demons were attracted by long and copious hair, since vainglory was inherent in its care and ornamentation.[39] Thus, women's hair could be the motivation for demonic sex, not to mention the sin of lust between humans. In addition to sexuality, uncovered, long, and loose hair, so typical in visual depictions of female demoniacs, was also a symbol of chaos and uncontrollability. The need to tame them was also manifest in the miracle collection of Johannes of Siena in the case of Christinella, who appeared in Chapter 5; the demon inside her demanded that her hair should be shaved, otherwise he would have the power to enter into her again (*alioquin in ipsam habeo potestatem reintrandi*).[40] In this context, the shaved head could be seen as a sign of voluntary humility offered to the saint,[41] but shaving someone's head was also a form of punishment, for example for sexual offences. In Christinella's case it illuminated the submission to the powers of Johannes of Siena and to the authority of the friars compiling this collection of miracles.

In Petrus Olavi's deposition, many women were tormented by *spiritus fornicationis*. The victims could have been deliberate sinners or unwilling victims of impure, lustful thoughts. These sinful women were described as deserving their punishment and labelled with the most pejorative terms, such as *incantatrix* or *meretrix*.[42] By this choice of rhetoric, Petrus Olavi was linking the use of magic and religious impurity to sexual impurity. His deposition had many elements in common with exempla, and depicted Birgitta as the complete opposite of the prevailing stereotype of the feminine. Birgitta was not only constructed as a saint, but as a female saint. The role of women possessed by demons was to further underline the specific position of Birgitta in her gender: chastity was essential for

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[38] On female hair as a symbol of temptation and penance, see Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, pp. 130–4 and 157–8. On combs as erotic objects, Diane Wolfthal, 'The Sexuality of the Medieval Comb,' in *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces*, ed. by Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 176–94.

[39] On William of Auvergne, see Berlioz, 'Pouvoirs et contrôle de la croyance,' pp. 5–27 and Elliott, *Bride of Christ*, p. 238.

[40] 'Vita ac Legenda Beati Ioachimi Senensis,' p. 392.

[41] For cutting one's hair as a voluntary act of penitence and gratitude, see the case in *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis XVI, p. 123 where a mother offered the clothes as well as the plaits of a recovered girl soon to be of marriageable age to the shrine of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino.

[42] *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, pp. 513 and 540.

her position, which was contrasted with the lustful female victims of demons. Obviously, Birgitta was a wife and a mother, but chastity was not only a physical category, as conduct was a crucial element in its construction: physical virginity did not ensure virtue and spiritual chastity was more important than its bodily analogue. Chastity was also a hierarchical construction.[43] Petrus Olavi clearly claimed authority in recognizing chastity and its constituent elements as well as their opposite. Tellingly, all these cases were *miracula in vita*, and thus it was not the *virtus* of the relics but Birgitta as a person that drove away the malign forces. Petrus Olavi was 'thinking with demons,' to follow Stuart Clark's formulation, when constructing the image of Birgitta as a saint. Another old associate of Birgitta, Alfonso of Jaén, followed a similar course but in a more restrained manner; the case of Picziolella is the only one with sexually harassing demons in his deposition.

The medieval laity acknowledged that moral transgression could lie behind demonic possession, but they did not favour sexual explanations either as a reason for possession or as its outcome. Demonic sex does not feature in the depositions of lay witnesses. Evidently, local clergy were more willing to associate demonic possession with sex, and this could lead even to open disputes about copulation with demons, as in the hearings of Robert of Canterbury or Birgitta. Demonic copulation emphasized the need for obedience and strengthened social hierarchies, particularly between the laity and clergy, and between the saint and his or her devotees.

'Come, Devil, Come, and Enter My Body'

Voluntary sex between witches and the Devil became a topic of more frequent discussion in demonological treatises during and after the fifteenth century; the theory of the *incubus* was one of its roots. This theory may have originated in Scholastic thought and it became significant in the twelfth century. Later copulation became a crucial element in the construction of the stereotypical image of a witch and a common element in forced witchcraft confessions. Copulation with the Devil was a ritualistic act and an essential element of a pact with the Devil or its equivalent.[44]

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[43] Virginity and chastity were not necessarily identical; Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3–7; see also Ruth Evans, Sarah Salih, and Anke Bernau, eds., *Medieval Virginities* and John Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity,' in *Medieval Virginities*, pp. 102–18; Karras, 'Thomas Aquinas's Chastity Belt: Clerical Masculinity in Medieval Europe,' in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe*, pp. 52–67.

[44] Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 54, 101, 144–6, 237. On the theory of the incubus, Russel, *Lucifer*, p. 183. Dyan Elliott, 'Pollution, Illusion, and Masculine Disarray: Nocturnal Emissions and the Sexuality of the Clergy,' in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, pp. 1–23, here p. 14.

While early students of witchcraft considered the theorists' fixation with demonic copulation to be a reflection of Christianity's hostility towards sex, from the 1970s on, the emphasis of interpretation has shifted to Christianity's hostility towards women. Walter Stephens, however, argues that the verification of other aspects of Christian truths was the main motivation. The copulation of women with demons would prove the reality of their bodily interaction and simultaneously verify Catholic dogmas, confirm the value of the sacraments, and hence support faith. Religious vindication, not prurience or misogyny, was the main motivator in his view.[45] This points in the same direction as the previous examples of dancing and involuntary sex with demons; at stake in these cases was also proper order and societal hierarchies.

Proper order, a sense of self, and giving voice to victims' and the community's anxieties were also present in depositions with sexual undertones. This is apparent in the case of the Cistercian convent of Santa Lucia in SanGinesio, central Italy, where three nuns became possessed at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Group possessions of nuns became notorious in the post-Reformation era; the best attested case is surely that of Loudon in the early seventeenth century.[46] In SanGinesio, seven depositions given by sisters of the convent were recorded in the canonization process of Nicholas of Tolentino. The situation must have been rather peculiar for quite some time: Sister Philippucia, the first victim, claimed that she was possessed for five years. After Philippucia's recovery, Sister Anthonia became afflicted. She was cured after approximately one year of possession. The third possessed nun was Estephanucia, but her case is mentioned briefly without any details of timing or duration.[47]

These demoniacs demonstrated rather typical symptoms: they rolled their eyes and twisted their mouths, lost their memories, and were out of their minds. According to the other nuns, they were *vexata*, *tentata*, or *occupata* by demons. However, there were other not so typical symptoms as well. Philippucia also

[45] Lately, the image of witchcraft as a women's holocaust has been repudiated and a more nuanced analysis of gendered features has been achieved. On the historiography, see Nenonen and Toivo, eds., *Writing Witch-Hunt Histories* and Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 3–11. Stephens also links the emergence of witchcraft theory and Protestantism: they were both manifestations of the same crisis of confidence in the efficacy of the sacraments. Cf., however, Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*, p. 222 *et passim*, who does not see such a straightforward interrelation in ideas about superstition. According to him, to argue for steadily growing concern over superstition during the fifteenth century is an oversimplification of a differentiated and complicated process.

[46] On this and other mass possession cases in female religious congregations, see Moshe Sluhovsky, 'The Devil in the Convent,' *The American Historical Review* 107:5 (2002): pp. 1378–411, esp. pp. 1379–90; de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*.

[47] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis XX–XXII and CXXIII–CXXVI. The cause of these afflictions has been attributed to a hallucinogenic substance as well as to diverse forms of schizophrenia. Michael Goodich, 'Sexuality, Family, and the Supernatural in the Fourteenth Century,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4:4 (1994): 493–515, here p. 513 and Giulio Marinozzi, 'Le malattie nel processo di canonizzazione di San Nicola da Tolentino,' in *San Nicola, Tolentino, le Marche*, pp. 339–50, esp. pp. 344–5.

walked on her hands and stood an egg on a wall; by the power of the Devil she was able to do things in an unnatural way, as the other sisters claimed. To turn the natural course of events into its inversion was typical of later witchcraft narrations. Stuart Clark argues that in a culture relying extensively on a system of dual classification, disorder was portrayed by inversion; a culture highly sensitive to contrary opposition was equally sensitive to the inversion of proper order.[48] Thus, walking on one's hands and making an egg stand were not inconsequential details in the depositions but rather manifestations of disorder symbolizing Philippucia's state. They were significant proofs of demonic presence: Philippucia had Belial or another demon inside her body (*ipse Bellial vel alter demon esset in corpore ipsius sororis Philippuccie*).

Even if the other sisters described the condition of the possessed as vexation or temptation, Alain Boureau claims that some kind of demonic pact can be seen in this case because of the calling up of the Devil.[49] According to the testifying nuns, Philippucia called for many demons or all the demons in hell, and particularly Belial. She directly invited him to come to her: 'Oh Devil, come, come to me!' (*O Bellial, veni, veni ad me*).[50] Belial was a Biblical name for the Devil; he was the prince of darkness, and contrasted to Christ, the light of the world. 'Sons of Belial' denoted sinners or possessed, who could be regarded as having a pact with the Devil, since Christ did not have any pact with Belial.[51] Stories of making a pact with the Devil were not only an element of early modern demonology but were rather typical during the Middle Ages. The earliest written evidence of a pact with the Devil is the story of Theophilus from late antiquity. According to Thomas Aquinas, a pact with the Devil could be made tacitly and even unintentionally by an illicit ritual; verbal consent, not to mention signing it by copulation, was not a prerequisite. However, calling out for demons would make the pact explicit; it could be seen as an intent to make a formal contractual agreement.[52]

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[48] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 69–70 *et passim*.

[49] Boureau, *Satan hérétique*, pp. 180–7.

[50] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* XXI, p. 140. Calling out to Belial is mentioned by all the witnesses save Philippucia herself.

[51] 'And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' (II Cor. 6:15). Later witchcraft theorists also claimed that the ability to see the demon was a result of a pact, since for others demons remained invisible. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, p. 105.

[52] The earliest versions of the story of Theophilus were apparently written in Greek and translated into Latin in the ninth century; in the high Middle Ages vernacular versions were in circulation. Boureau, *Satan hérétique*, pp. 94–100. On other medieval examples and uses of the pact to demonize minorities like Jews, heretics, and Muslims, see Russel, *Lucifer*, pp. 82–6. The evolution of ideas was not straightforward and in the mid-fifteenth-century case of Perrinus Hervei the distinction between possession and madness was not clear despite the fact that he had invoked demons. The case is cited in Laura Ackerman Smoller, 'A Case of Demonic Possession in Fifteenth-Century Brittany: Perrine Hervé and the Nascent Cult of Vincent Ferrer,' in *Voices from the Bench: The Narratives of Lesser Folk in Medieval Trials*, ed. by Michael Goodich (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 149–76. See also Smoller, *The Chopped-Up Baby*, pp. 31–3.

Lyndal Roper, in her study of the German witch craze, sees intercourse with a demon as sealing a pact, it being a constituent of the submissive relationship of the accused witches with the Devil. She links the pact to marriage: intercourse was a way to consummate marriage and to form a permanent bond of servitude between the witch and the Devil. Intercourse as a way to form a pact may have been more comprehensible for the accused women than signing a contract.[53] Similarly, the Scottish elite understood the demonic pact as being akin to marriage, which affected the importance of sexual intercourse in forming it. The majority of the accused were women, but some men also confessed to having sex with the queen of fairies. On the other hand, confessions of copulation with demons are few and far between in England, probably because torture was illegal.[54]

In didactic material and in art, the pact became a prominent theme from the thirteenth century on. Alain Boureau sees the end of the thirteenth century as a crucial turning point, while early witchcraft theorists as well as other modern scholars date the change of ideas to around the year 1400. In the thirteenth century, the most probable protagonists for forming a pact with the Devil were the necromancers, learned elite men. By its practitioners, necromancy was considered to be a learned art that often required ritual purity and always expertise. Witchcraft as such was not yet a major concern for the Church since many thirteenth- and fourteenth-century authors linked the pact with heresy.[55] During the fourteenth century, some Church officials still thought that a pact with the Devil was not necessarily a permanent one but could be renewed: faith and sacraments could be renounced time and again yet one could return to them with no lasting ill effects. Later, the nature of the pact changed; the participants were no longer considered (nearly) equal, but humans involved in such relations were obliged to do homage to the Devil, which led to ideas about Satanic worship and witchcraft. Simultaneously, the explicit signing of a pact, a written contract, changed into implicit symbols and rituals; a pact was not necessarily a conscious and deliberate submission.[56]

[53] Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 82–103.

[54] Julian Goodare, 'Men and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland,' in *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 149–70, esp. 160–1. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 102–6.

[55] Boureau, *Satan hérétique*, on social, political, and religious ideas about pacts, pp. 93–123. On the interconnection of witchcraft and heresy, Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft*, p. 58. Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, pp. 102, 106–10. Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, pp. 53, 177; on the case of Dame Alice Kyteler with claims of repeated pacts, pp. 264–6. On necromantic rites, see also Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, and for the dating of the change, Young, *A History of Exorcism*, pp. 66–7.

[56] See also Smoller, 'Dominicans and Demons,' for a miracle of Vincent Ferrer from the mid-fifteenth century which involved a written pact with the Devil but not apparently diabolical witchcraft. Written pacts were still used in the early modern era and practices depended heavily on the social status of the participants. Russel, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, pp. 144–6, 185–6, 204–8; Russel, *Lucifer*, pp. 82–3, 299–300.

It is doubtful whether the participants thought that Philippucia had formed a demonic pact. Alain Boureau, however, argues that these cases from SanGinesio are profoundly different from cases of demonic possession in which members of the laity testified. True enough, more than usual attention is paid to describing the unnatural deeds of these demoniacs. The convent residents may have been better educated in such matters. Therefore, they may have had a keen eye for the details of these deeds and been able to construct their narration by using them. Nevertheless, the difference compared to lay education may have not been very great, since the nuns testifying in the case cannot be claimed to have been well educated, as their shortcomings in the use of Latin demonstrated. For three of them, the questions posed by the inquisitorial committee needed to be translated into Italian (*vulgariter et distincte lecto et exposito*). Such references to the use of the vernacular were rare in Nicholas' process. Didier Lett argues that even if this formula was not used for the majority of witnesses, it does not mean that all the others spoke Latin; even if the list of questions was written down in Latin, they may have been read out in a vernacularized mode of pronunciation.[57] Nevertheless, the need to explain the use of vernacular may imply an inferior understanding of Latin when compared to other witnesses. Thus, the level of education of these nuns remains unknown; it is possible that they were not aware of learned theological definitions such as the ideas about a demonic pact presented by Thomas Aquinas and others.

The social turmoil caused by Philippucia's, Anthonia's, and Estephanucia's conduct and the moral condemnation of their deeds are manifest in the depositions. In addition to other symptoms, these nuns also sang indecent songs and said shameful things to other nuns, acting like whores.[58] The level of toleration of cursing and sexually coloured speech, which *verba obprobriosa/meretriculosa* imply, was obviously lower in a monastic context than in a secular one. A *meretrix* could mean a prostitute, a woman merchandising her sexuality, but also any woman of loose morals; the term carried a lot of judgemental weight.[59] To use it to describe a fellow sister of the same convent was a very strong accusation, revealing in particular a flagrant violation of regulations and modes of behaviour by these nuns. The exact content of these deplorable words is not recorded, but they added another linkage to illicit sexuality in these cases.

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[57] Lett, *Un procès de canonisation*, pp. 266–7.

[58] In the case of Sister Philippucia: 'dicebat ipsa soror Philippucia dictis monialibus verba vituperosa et meretriculosa ad bonas et honestas mulieres et religiosas non spectantia,' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis XXII, pp. 141–2; Sister Anthonia: 'cantabat cantillenas ad moniales non spectantes, verba vituperosa et obprobriosa dicebat,' *testis* XXI, p. 136; Sister Estephanucia: 'non faciebat nisi cacchinari, et iacebat aliquando esset mortua, clamabat demones sepe sepius,' *testis* CXXIII, p. 325.

[59] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 11; Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 72–3.

The utterance of Philippucia directly calling the Devil to come to her similarly included sexual connotations, since spirit possession was comprehended as concrete penetration. According to Dyan Elliott, raptures can be analysed in sexual terms: an overpowering male spirit took hold of a fainting and passive female. Spiritual raptures manifested a heterosexual dynamic, even sexual violence, in her view.[60] Demons were also typically seen as masculine and more powerful than Christians. *Raptus/rapta* could mean both rape and spiritual rapture, and it was also occasionally used for demonic possession in depositions in canonization processes. The proscribed sexual overtones are all the more noteworthy since Philippucia was a nun, a bride of Christ. Demonic possession always created alterity, but in this case it jeopardized chastity, the very basis of the social identity, not only of the victim herself, but also of the whole community.

Chastity was a constructed state that needed recognition; it was a distinct sexual orientation. Chastity was not a lack of desire but a way to redirect it to matters of the spirit. The erotic could overlap with the spiritual but was, nonetheless, distinguished from the carnal, as Ruth Mazo Karras argues.[61] Dyan Elliott provides a model of female mysticism where the image of the mystic as a *sponsa Christi* and the mystical marriage with Christ emerged slowly and then led to the idea of witches copulating with demons. Nuptial images in the lives of celibate women were used already in late antiquity, but the idea of the *sponsa Christi* and images of mystical marriage surfaced first in Northern Europe and were utilized in Italy during the fourteenth century. By the end of the Middle Ages, marriage to Christ was not only a literary theme but a whole set of rituals on a girl's path to becoming a nun. These rituals closely resembled actual wedding ceremonies up to the point where they can both be considered as related versions of the same act: both celebrated the giving of a woman to a man.[62]

This argument is pushed further by Sarah McNamer. She does not see the consecration rituals as mimicking wedding ceremonies, but argues that they actually signified making a marriage contract with legal efficacy. In her view, the idea of being married to Christ gave religious women greater incentive to cultivate compassion for the suffering of Christ. Their marriage could not be consummated in this world but had to wait until the hereafter. Therefore, an important part of proving marital fidelity was showing *maritalis affectio*; that is, pain on account of Christ's suffering. This could prove that the virgin or nun was worthy of the

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[60] Elliott, 'The Physiology of Rapture', p. 161.

[61] Karras, 'Thomas Aquina's Chastity Belt', and Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, pp. 56–7.

[62] Elliott, *Bride of Christ*, pp. 177–219; Kate Lowe, 'Secular Brides and Convent Brides: Wedding Ceremonies in Italy during the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation', in *Marriage in Italy 1300–1650*, ed. by Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 41–65, particularly p. 44. Kate Lowe stresses the subordination of women in both instances: a woman was subordinated either to her husband and his and her families' interests or to the Church; neither sort of bride was consulted as to her own wishes.

marriage and its rewards in heaven.[63] In this explanatory frame, Philippucia was not only violating her vow of chastity but also committing a kind of adultery by inviting the Devil to come to her.

Philippucia herself did not mention calling the Devil or use sexually coloured textual imagery in her deposition; she claimed that she saw endless walls, animals, and crude people day and night so that she was constantly being deceived and driven to terror.[64] By *figuras hominum diversorum et turpissimorum* Philippucia may have referred only to the fact that she saw notorious local malefactors attacking her, as was shown in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, *turpis* can also mean indecent or lewd. Therefore, it is possible that she, too, saw sexual images as did Ermine of Reims, who was regularly visited by demons trying to have sex with her, inducing in her visions of love-making couples or handsome men.[65] Speaking out aloud of her visions or temptations may have been the reason why Philippucia was considered to have acted or spoken indecently. However, her visions of sex acts may also have been violent and terrifying. According to the depositions of other nuns, Philippucia called for the Devil to help her since Johannes de Esculo and Raynaldo de Burumforte, notorious local malefactors with reputations for violence, were attacking her. During her seizures Philippucia may have been afraid of these men and of rape, and not fantasizing about having sex with demons. By naming these tormentors, Philippucia and other nuns formed a category of spiritual impurity which connected demonic sex with political adversaries.

References to sex with the Devil are implicit in Philippucia's case, but as she voluntarily called out to the Devil, her case could be seen as containing elements of a diabolic pact. However, Philippucia was clearly not considered to have renounced Christianity as she was chosen to testify.[66] If Philippucia was thought

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[63] McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, pp. 34–40. Cf., however, Martha Newman, 'Crucified by the Virtues: Monks, Lay Brothers, and Women in Thirteenth-Century Cistercian Saints' Lives,' in *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, pp. 182–209 for Cistercian monks depicting themselves with feminine images, and also their soul as Christ's bride.

[64] 'Item dixit quod ipsa testis existens in dicto monasterio patiebatur hanc infirmitatem, scilicet quod ipsa erat invanita ita fortiter quod volvebat oculos subtus desuper, turcebat os, trepudiabat et multas iniurias et vituperosas monialibus dicti monasterii dicebat et visiones multe sibi apparebant, quandoque videbatur sibi apparere et videre mures infinitos et figuras hominum diversorum et turpissimorum et animalium quamplurimum die noctuque ita et taliter et tam sepius quod ipsa ad vanitates et terrores inducebatur continue.' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* XX, p. 137. See also *Actes anciens et documents concernant le Bienhereux Urban V Pape*, 196, p. 258 for Guilhelmes de Niveriis, who lost his memory, ran here and there day and night, and saw various visions 'imaginationes diversas fantasticas semper habebat in capite.' He was, nevertheless, seen as *freneticus* and *furiosus*.

[65] Ermine was a widow aspiring to a religious life; she had many mystical experiences and visions involving both saints and demons. Contemporaries were uncertain about her symptoms and did not know whether she was ill, possessed by a demon, or possessed by the divine spirit. See Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims* and Elliott, *Bride of Christ*, pp. 229–31.

[66] Philippucia was summoned on 14 August with other nuns from the convent. *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, citationes testium, p. 41. Evidently, Anthonia was neither summoned nor interrogated, since her name does not appear in the list of witnesses with the other nuns and her deposition cannot be found.

to have deliberately engaged with the Devil, it is unlikely she would have been given the opportunity to testify herself. Unlike the later witchcraft trials, where the testimony and confession of the witch herself was of the utmost importance, the canonization processes, as inquiries into sanctity, worked the other way round: to be summoned as a witness and be given the opportunity to testify to one's personal miraculous experiences was typically a sign of privileged status. Even if people of bad reputation, *infamia*, were, according to canon law, allowed to testify in their own cases,[67] such persons do not appear often as witnesses in canonization processes. If the saintly candidates did not withdraw their intercession from such people, then the inquisitorial committees sifted them out of the records.[68]

The privileged position of the witnesses is particularly emphasized in Nicholas' process, where the local elite dominated the hearing; they were chosen to tell about their miraculous experiences to the commissioners and give testimony about the life of Nicholas.[69] The hierarchy of witnesses was established not only by the summons to testify but also by the nature of the questions: details of the protagonist's life were considered to be of crucial importance, for miracles alone were not enough when evaluating sainthood.[70] Therefore the organizers usually required witnesses of the candidate's *vita* to be men of good social and/or religious status and Nicholas' process was no exception. Only one woman was asked all the *articuli*, the questions about the life and merits of Saint Nicholas.[71] The nuns of Santa Lucia were, however, asked about the first article, which concerned the fame of the life and miracles of Nicholas. It was not regularly asked of all the women testifying in the hearing, regardless of their personal relationship with Nicholas.[72] This marked these nuns as trustworthy and reliable witnesses. Thus, despite her former position as a demoniac, by the time of the hearing, Philippucia was a sufficiently respectable member of her community to be able to give reliable information about a religious matter of high importance.

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[67] *CIC I* C. 2 q. 4 *c.* 2; for later regulations concerning witnesses' reputation X 2.20, *CIC II*, col. 315–40.

[68] See, however, BAV Vat. Lat. 4015, ff. 220r–222r for the case of a well-known local malefactor testifying about his own miraculous resurrection.

[69] On the quantitative and qualitative value of the depositions of the male elite in particular, see Lett, 'La parole des humbles,' pp. 233–41.

[70] André Vauchez argues that by the beginning of the fourteenth century miracles served only to confirm the validity of a person's sainthood, which was based on other criteria. Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, p. 581. On the validation of miracles, see, however, Wetzstein, *Heilige vor Gericht*, pp. 246, 280. Cf. Finucane, *Contested Canonizations*, pp. 15–24.

[71] *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CCLXXX, pp. 573–7. On the content of these questions, see *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino, articuli*, pp. 16–21.

[72] Some women like *domina* Iacobucia (*Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* LXXXIII), Philippa (*testis* XCIII), Ceccha Ugolini (*testis* XCIV), and *domina* Nina (*testis* XCV) were interrogated about the first question. However, many other women were not interrogated even about this article dealing with his reputation and miracles, even if they had long known Nicholas. See, for example, *testis* CCLXXII, CCXXXVI, CCXXXVIII, CCXXXIII, CCXXXVIII, and CCLXIX. See also Lett, 'La parole des humbles,' pp. 233–40.

Philippucia's narration emphasized her seizure as an infirmity or confusion (*infirmitas seu stupefactio*). She admitted the majority of the symptoms described by others except acquaintance with demons.[73] Philippucia's narrative strategy was, in addition to emphasizing the experience of infirmity, to argue firmly for the manifestation of her devotion. She claimed, and other witnesses corroborated her statement, that she had made, and made good, a promise to embark barefoot with hands tied on an ascetic pilgrimage to the shrine of Nicholas. She also separately mentioned that she had requested permission for her pilgrimage both from the mother house of her convent and from her abbess.[74] In this way, she was emphasizing the restoration of hierarchy, the proper order of things, and her personal recognition and acceptance of them.

Pilgrimages were the most typical counter-gifts promised to Saint Nicholas. They were a concrete sign of gratitude and devotion; at the same time, they were a way to emphasize the successful invocation and grace gained. All pilgrimages were public deeds and visible manifestations, but by ascetic practices, such as walking barefoot and with hands tied, like Philippucia, the journey was made very public, a spectacle. Voluntary humility was also an essential element when constructing oneself as a pious Christian and devotee of a saint, since humility was the virtuous counterpart of the capital sin of pride and an important step on the path away from sin towards salvation. Bare feet also enhanced devotion as they enabled fuller contact with the sacred sphere; they were regularly mentioned as a manifestation of devotion in pilgrimages. Tied hands, on the other hand, were a rare a sign of humility and gratitude; examples can only be found in Nicholas' process. The journey performed with hands tied may have been a symbolic way to proclaim, among other things, that the pilgrim was bound by an obligation: she had received divine grace and was obliged to pay tribute to Saint Nicholas. Only after the promise was fulfilled were petitioners such as Philippucia free from the responsibility to offer a counter-gift to Saint Nicholas, a counter-gift that she herself had symbolically become.[75]

Obviously, an ascetic mode of travel also signified penitence; such pilgrimages did not, however, signify any special sense of shame or sinfulness, as they were

[73]   See also Smoller, *The Chopped-Up Baby*, p. 110, who interprets similar conflicting testimonies in a case of demonic possession as the acting out of personal rivalry.

[74]   'promittens, si liberaretur a dicta infirmitate seu stupefactione, accedere Tholentinum ad archam dicti beati Nicolay ligatis manibus et discalciata pedibus…obtempta licentia ab abbate monasterii Claravallis de Clente ordinis cisterciensium et ab abbatissa dicti monasterii Sancte Lucie, accessit, ut se vovit, ad archam Sancti Nicolay predictam discalciata et manibus ligata et fuit de predictis liberata.' *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis XX, p. 137.

[75]   Personal penitential practices, such as fasting or ascetic pilgrimages, were regularly favoured among petitioners in the Italian material. They were also particularly favoured by women. See Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 184–7. The symbolic nature of the offering is underlined by the fact that sometimes the one taken to the shrine with hands tied was not the petitioner him- or herself but the one for whom Nicholas' help was needed. *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, testis CIV; p. 296; testis CXIII, p. 309.

rather typical in this hearing and promised in various situations. Furthermore, in Nicholas' process they were particularly favoured by women, who were prosperous town dwellers and who claimed to be firmly devoted to Saint Nicholas. Many of them promised to visit his shrine in an ascetic mode annually.[76] Therefore, rather than being manifestations of former disgrace, these signs of humility were an acknowledged and approved way to emphasize one's devotion to the local intercessor. The core message of a pilgrimage was obviously targeted towards the divine, but simultaneously they contained social messages. Since they were public performances, they were evaluated by the surrounding community. Through her humility, Philippucia was drawing attention to the grace she was the beneficiary of and to her own position as miraculée. While giving their testimonies, the witnesses were not only providing proof of theological aspects, like demonic influence, but at the same time giving meaning to their past experiences and emphasizing certain elements in their personal status and identity. To give an image of oneself as a devout Christian was also to claim authority for one's words, and thus to appear as a trustworthy witness.[77] Philippucia succeeded in reclaiming her position as a pious nun, thus restoring and confirming the peace and harmony of the community.

The potential for demonic sex may reflect a combination of inner conflict and social dynamics; that is, the demands of a devotional and chaste life for women and the options for expressing anxieties over such a life in an understandable manner. This is also shown in the case of Jaqueline, a forty-year-old nun at Saint Germain des Prez in Paris. After a severe fever she became possessed, but recovered through the intercession of Saint Louis IX. The French version of the narration is likely based on the testimony of Jaqueline herself as well as on the testimonies of other nuns from the same convent. According to the narration, Jaqueline did not want to adore God but the Devil, whom she served. 'He is my God, I have him with me and have given my body and soul to him and he guards me.'[78] Her outburst indicates that surrendering her body and soul was a deliberate decision; it also includes worship and a closeness that could be defined

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[76] For repeated promises of ascetic pilgrimages, see for example the depositions of Bertina (*Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, *testis* CLII, pp. 366–71) and Iacobucia (*testis* CIII, pp. 293–4). Bertina was described by her husband Zappa as a *devotissima* of Nicholas (*testis* XL, p. 172). In Nicholas' records altogether eighteen cases of women making a vow of an ascetic pilgrimage can be found; the corresponding number for men is eight. Women also favoured pilgrimages made barefoot and with hands tied; often their promises included both of them. For a detailed analysis of these practices in Nicholas' process, see Katajala-Peltomaa, *Gender, Miracles and Daily Life*, pp. 181–2 with footnotes.

[77] On rhetorical strategies in judicial testimonies, see Davis, *Fiction in the Archives* and Toivo, *Witchcraft and Gender*, pp. 77–110.

[78] 'Je ne le veil pas aourer, ainz veil aourer le deable a qui je serf, qui est mon dieu et que j'ai avecques moi, a qui je sui donne en cors et en ame et qui me garde!' *Les Miracles de Saint Louis*, ed. by B. Percival (Paris: H. Champion: 1931), p. 91.

as intimacy. A pact is not explicitly mentioned, nor is any direct invocation, but the message is unmistakeable.

Apparently, Jaqueline had taken penance too far; she had mortified her flesh with severe fasting and acts of penance, as the other nuns described the preceding situation. Sylvia Huot, in her study of madness in medieval French literature, sees Jaqueline as a disruptive presence reflecting self-loathing and self-destruction; religious motivation was an essential element in her situation. She also reads the case and its resolution as a reflection of gendered hierarchy: 'Diagnosed by a male confessor, cured by a male saint, the madwoman readily signifies the excesses of the will and the frailties of the flesh that must be disciplined and controlled by the male power structure of the church.'[79]

Evidently, Jaqueline's religious fervour and commitment went too far. From this perspective, her case seems to fit into the pattern set out by Dyan Elliott: Jaqueline's relationship with the Devil resembled a mystical marriage gone wrong; she had given herself entirely to her master and the union was tight and intimate. Her experience might well not have been very far from those of women mystics. Mystics' visions of their interaction with the divine spirit and the sensual, even erotic aspects in them did not always utilize bridal imagery, nor did they always take place in the garden of delights. They also encompassed darker elements, including sexual violence and despair. As Karma Locherie has commented, an experience of mystical sex was not necessarily that of courtship, as it could be frightening, violating, and debilitating,[80] thus coming quite close to the situation of Philippucia and Jaqueline.

The very life in a convent may offer an explanation for these experiences. Barbara Newman, for example, argues that feelings of despair, unshakeable guilt, temptations to blasphemy, and terrifying visions were connected to sexual frustration and to resentment of religious life.[81] Elements of affective religiosity, such as its emphasis on the suffering of Christ, may have increased the emotional and psychological stress. The sexual frustration of nuns behind the symptoms of demonic possession was aired as an explanation already in the early modern era.[82] Sylvia Huot argues that after a person's position was found intolerable or unmanageable, the performance which had maintained that identity was abandoned.[83] These nuns obviously displayed a failure in their performance as pious brides of Christ: by their indecent songs, gesticulating, and particularly by calling for the

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[79] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, pp. 27–9.

[80] Karma Locherie, 'Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies,' in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, pp. 180–200.

[81] Newman 'Possessed by the Spirit,' p. 740; Walter Stephens (*Demon Lovers*, p. 347) argues that possession could have brought repressed sexuality to the surface and displayed it publicly in cases of possessed nuns.

[82] Johann Weyer, 'De praestigiis daemonum,' p. 311. See also Sluhovsky, 'The Devil in the Convent,' pp. 1396–400. For further examples, see Levack, *The Devil Within*, pp. 175–9.

[83] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, p. 180.

Devil and claiming servitude to him, they manifested the very antithesis of their calling and hence revealed anxieties hidden in the cultural pattern of chastity.

The symptoms of Jaqueline and the Cistercian nuns in SanGinesio may reveal internal conflict, but the issue was not only these nuns' inner experiences but also their relationship with the whole community. What is important here, and clearly different from later witchcraft accusations, is the liminality; their fall from virtue was not a permanent one, as the selection of Philippucia as a witness shows. Similarly, the rhetoric underlines the exceptional nature of Jaqueline's affliction: convulsions, blasphemies, and insults were not part of her normal conduct since she was basically virtuous, wise, and good.[84] Another difference is the way these women took the initiative. Quite often witches having sex with the Devil were depicted as passive, as seduced by demons, or as forming a hierarchical relation by submitting themselves to the Devil. In witchcraft confessions a wooing demon was first described as an ideal lover. The witch may have understood that something was amiss, perhaps because the body of the lover was cold and his feet hard, but failed to identify the suitor properly.[85] Philippucia or Jaqueline were not fooled: Philippucia was active in inviting Belial to her and Jaqueline claimed that she herself had given her body to the Devil. Even more active initiatives to form a sexual relationship with the Devil can be found in didactic hagiographic material. Thomas of Pavia in his compilation of the *gesta* of Franciscan friars tells the story of Munelis, who was molested by her brother. Out of shame for this incestuous copulation she entered a town square and in the middle of the night called the Devil: 'Come, Devil, come, and enter my body, since I want to be liberated from the hands of my brother.'[86] Like Philippucia, she was calling to the Devil for help when she had been molested by malevolent forces and no other help was at hand. In Munelis' case, too, the sexual relationship remains mostly implicit; after her invocation, she saw two small figures, which resembled Moors, approaching her, then she fainted from fear. According to Thomas of Pavia, the motivation was to avoid greater harm or else arose from desperation. The compiler claimed that the narration was based on Munelis' testimony, but it seems that the case was only loosely connected to actual events. According to the narration, Munelis was fiercely possessed and was taken by her relatives to several shrines, but in vain. Finally, she was cured in Corneto, at the shrine of Benevenuto of Eugubio.

Neither Munelis, Philippucia, nor Jaqueline were seduced and deceived by demons; these women were not passive prey, nor were they depicted as inherently

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[84] 'Bonne femme et sage et honeste et religeuse.' *Les Miracles de Saint Louis*, p. 93.

[85] Lyndal Roper, analysing court trials in sixteenth-century Germany, argues that torture or the threat of it was used in getting confessions. In part, the confessions accorded with demonological theories, as copulation with the Devil was an essential element in them. In part, however, they contained elements from local culture and fairly tales. Roper, *Witch Craze*, pp. 82–7.

[86] 'Veni, diabole, veni, et intra corpus meum, ut liberari valeam de manibus fratris mei.' Thomas of Pavia: *Dialogus de gestis sanctorum fratrum minorum,* pp. 96–7. See also Levack, *The Devil Within*, p. 178 for a possessed girl who claimed she had given herself to the Devil after being raped.

and irreversibly evil, as might well have happened during the witch craze, when fears and fantasies about female sexuality took a turn to the sinister and copulation with the Devil became a ritualistic act with an irreversible outcome. Demonic sex was a deliberate strategy offering them an opportunity to cope with their situations, to give voice to their tribulations, as in the case of the newly delivered Palmeria or the raped woman at the shrine of Charles of Blois. Demonic sex required inward aggression, but in intolerable situations the victim's own body was the target most readily (or solely) available for disruptive behaviour, for manifesting anger. On a communal level these female bodies served as a corporeal site of cultural values, their affliction offering a channel through which communal anxieties could be expressed. Philippucia and Jaqueline were valued as pious brides of Christ, but at some point piety and religious fervour could turn into its opposite, into whore-like behaviour which shamed the whole convent. On a general cultural level, these cases convey the fear that inner spirituality was not fully observable by others and that female spirituality could not be controlled by the authorities.

Conclusions

Demonic possession was a physical phenomenon that on occasion had sexual connotations. In the didactic material, demonic presence was often linked to women's promiscuity. Ultimately, the question in these cases was not one of women's carnality or immorality, but of hierarchy: who was to decide and define proper ritual and proper religious practice. Disobedience towards clerical authorities was demonized; demonic sex and feminine lust served to propagate proper order, proper ritual practice, the position of the clergy, and the sanctity of a saint. The female body and its linkages to sexuality and ritual practices needed to be tamed and brought under male, clerical control, but misogyny was only a tool in this process. The deposition of Petrus Olavi is a case in point here. He claimed authority in recognizing the chastity and sanctity of Birgitta by using pejorative language about the female victims of demons, thus constructing a clear opposition between Birgitta and other women.

It is noteworthy that lay depositions did not include elements of demonic sex. For the laity, copulation with demons was not a necessary or even typical element in possession narrations, and sexually rapacious *incubi* were not part of their recollections or rhetoric. In lay depositions, demonic presence was formed by other means than sexual liaisons. The body, also and especially the sexual female body, had also positive connotations, as bodily powers and capacities were necessary for fertility and the continuation of the family. For the laity, corporeality was essential for their temporal survival. It involved health, the ability to work,

and reproduction. In addition, bodily practices like dancing during festivities or embarking on a pilgrimage to a sacred space were for them central parts of religion-as-lived. For the laity, corporeality could never be just a threat to salvation.

For the victims themselves, to turn their experiences into the language of the demonic may have been the only way to give voice to and act out tribulations in a comprehensible manner. On a communal level, such cases seem to express general fears concerning female spirituality: in the end it was not fully controllable and the most pious enterprises could turn into the complete opposite. To interpret this kind of performance as copulation with demons suggests that chastity was a cultural sore point. Correspondingly, the shared interpretations testify to the limited options women had to express aggression and anger in a culturally acceptable way. Demonic sex was not, however, considered to be a renunciation of Christianity; it was not a sign of a permanent pact. The demoniacs could, after a miraculous intervention, return to their former position and even become respected members of their community once more.

The clerical and lay spheres formed an unbroken continuum rather than a binary opposition. As far as copulation with demons is concerned, however, the spheres seem to be more distinct than in other types of miracles or even in other cases of demonic possession. For the laity, combining devotional strategies and gender construction with 'thinking with demons,' that is identifying, explaining, and solving problems in daily life by demonic activity, led to another kind of outcome than among the clergy, who seem to have been more willing to link the feminine with the demonic and to use female sexuality as a device in this process. The properly ordered and contained body was an ideal for both the laity and the clergy, but as far as female sexuality was concerned, it meant different things and had different outcomes. The unifying elements were, nonetheless, the corporeal experiences upon which religion-as-lived was built; the performative space religion created was made real for the individual and for the community by embodied signs and practices. Demons were a fluid rhetorical resource in explaining conflicts on personal, communal, and general cultural levels.

8

Conclusions

Demonic Devices: Lived Religion as a Methodology

This exploration set out to find the meanings of demonic presence in daily life. The chosen context is the experience of the miraculous, specifically the deliveries from malign sprits brought about by the intervention of saints. Interactions with both heavenly intercessors and malign spirits were at the core of the analysis and religion as lived practice formed the analytical frame. Under scrutiny was the whole process of interpretation to be found in the depositions of canonization hearings. This includes the cultural perceptions, the requirements of the hagiographic genre and canon law, as well as the practices, rituals, and narrations of the participants. For this kind of scrutiny, the essential background element was the nature of the supernatural forces involved, the existence of malign spirits and heavenly intercessors and their continuous activity in the world, and their contribution to the lives of Christians. The omnipresence of the supernatural was fundamental in medieval culture. A miracle, 'an occurrence that ran against the accustomed way of nature and caused wonder,'[1] was a quintessential element linked to spiritual creatures. A miracle was a divine grace brought about by the power of God for the merits of a saint, and often by his or her relics, but supernatural occurrences could also be performed *per malos*.[2] Learned conceptualizations of cosmology were fertilized by the genre of hagiographic texts, most importantly the *vita et miracula*, that flourished from early Christianity on. The laity and especially the clergy were familiar with the typical elements in a miracle narration and so the genre affected the way real-life experiences were understood and interpreted. Depositions in a canonization process were consciously or unconsciously shaped by earlier examples, both textual and real-life.

Canonization processes were judicial hearings and their records were not merely didactic compilations. This means that behind the textual level and written narrations, there was an actual event, an incident that was interpreted by the

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[1] Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, X, 1.

[2] Miracles as a ratification of sainthood remained problematic all through the Middle Ages. They were crucial in defining sanctity but could not be the only criteria, since other supernatural forces could also make them happen. Finucane, *Contested Canonizations*, pp. 15–25. See also Wetzstein, *Heilige vor Gericht*, pp. 246, 280.

participants to fit into the pattern of the miraculous. Oral versions of an occurrence, a demonic presence and subsequent delivery, circulated in the community; they were collective interpretations of the past and an attempt to give meaning to the experience. They were simultaneously local and universal, being embedded in the practices of the area and reflecting regional devotional customs, but participating in the wider Christian discourses of the miraculous and the diabolical. Without local fame, the inquisitorial committee would not have been able to know about the incident and the officials would not have investigated the case, since, if the regulations of canon law were observed, all the cases needed to have public prominence, *fama publica*, to be investigated in an *inquisitio*-type hearing. The local interpretations of the demonic and the miraculous needed, however, to fit into the generally accepted cultural patterns.

Not all the experiences of the demonic were resolved by miraculous means and only a fraction of them were ever recorded. Nor were all cases accepted for scrutiny or all witnesses interrogated. A certain kind of pre-evaluation of the credibility of the case and the reliability of witnesses took place before the actual hearing. Therefore, narrations found in the records went through various stages of selection and reshaping before being written down. Demons could act as an element of validation if the inquisitorial committee favoured this kind of explanation. They could have also been a reason to reject a case, or at least interpret it differently. A third possibility was that the demons were not the crucial feature which needed to be substantiated or which verified a case as a genuine miracle. Mixing the terminology of demonic possession with that of other mental disorders was not uncommon, indicating that the difference in the experience was not self-evident: both demons and illnesses could be active, inexplicable forces but a saint had the power to overcome them. It seems that a clear dividing line between natural and spiritual causes, or an all-encompassing cultural script of demonic presence, did not exist. Rather, the dividing line was blurred and categorization was formed differently in each context.

At the actual interrogation, the questionnaire of the inquisitorial committee to a considerable extent guided the whole recording process. Nevertheless, the collective ways to interpret the affliction—the local oral narrations of the event as well as personal choices in rhetoric—were present in the depositions, too. The final level of the miracle process was the narrative one: the participants emphasized certain elements of the events. By shared narrations, they formed a coherent and logical sequence of the past events and simultaneously controlled and organized the present. Therefore, the experience of demonic presence being dealt with here is a multi-layered process of interpretation, the end result of which was the recorded deposition illuminating how norms and values as well as symbols, signs, performances, and their narrative forms were all part of religion-as-lived. Thoughts and ideas about demons were expressed in daily life and they intersected individual, communal, and cultural levels.

Religion offered room to manoeuvre and furnished participants with the opportunity to take initiatives. Demonic presence was a fluid and multifaceted category, and the necessity of shared interpretations in comprehending it stands out. The content and result of these negotiations varied, and quite how, why, and who used demons as a device were derived from local needs and defined differently in each set of sources. As a feature of lived religion, three major themes relating to demonic presence emerged: identity and alterity, gender and corporeality, and the construction of the sacred. All of them were integral parts of learned discussions, but they also reflected daily needs and fears, incorporating both individual experiences and communal interpretations. They occurred in all the chosen material, be it didactic literature, a local register of miracles, or an official judicial hearing for canonization.

From the perspective of identity creation, demoniacs served as a counter-image of proper order, hence reinforcing it. Demoniacs represented 'the Other' in various ways; their condition was a behavioural, spiritual, and physical deviance revealing the bounds of normalcy. There was not, however, one single discourse governing the alterity of demoniacs. Not even the clergy formed a uniform group in this regard. In the didactic material, demonic possession was readily used to signal personal culpability after committing a sin and particularly after contesting hierarchies and disobeying clerical authorities. The commissioners of official hearings, for their part, were not too concerned to find a spiritual causality behind possession. Their intention was to find firm proof of the affliction and subsequent miraculous recovery. The most judicially rigorous of them were even quite reluctant to accept demons as an explanation without concrete evidence.

Generally, both clergy and laity understood that signs of demonic presence might remain indeterminate. It seems that for the lay participants the main reason for labelling a case as demonic possession may have been the need to explain the otherwise unexplainable, and potentially exculpate oneself. Part of rendering the experience more comprehensible and at least partially controllable was to propose a simple and concrete cause for the possession, like an accidentally swallowed demon. Such explanations may also have been a strategy to overcome alterity and restore proper order.

Lost mental and bodily control were signifiers of demonic possession and the alterity of a demoniac was encapsulated in the symptoms. The possessed were a disruptive presence in their communities who challenged proper order, hence the depositions tended to concentrate on the social disruption. General disorder, like damaging property and roaming around the village day and night, noise, cries, and blasphemous and insulting words, as well as aggression towards oneself or the others, was the most alarming. Rather than furnishing a justification for punishing this kind of behaviour, demons provided a means to explain it, but not all turmoil or afflictions were of demonic origin. The whole process, diagnosing demonic presence, treating the deviant individual, and coping with communal

chaos as well as deciding upon the devotional strategies to overcome the affliction, points towards the pragmatism of the participants. For them, it was sensible to try various means of cure and attempt to minimize the damage by taking preventive care measures. Malevolent supernatural forces may have been ubiquitous, as their active presence in daily life indicates, but demonic possession was not a haphazard definition, but rather a deliberate choice based on collective reflection.

Regardless of the disharmony demonic presence caused, it simultaneously created consensus and enhanced collaboration, as the search for a cure was often a joint effort. Joint pilgrimages may be taken as an expression of toleration and even of forgiveness. The expelled demons and restoration of peace and harmony were affirmations of the heavenly patron's powers and God's grace towards the community. Ultimately, demonic presence strengthened collective identity. Therefore, accounts of demonic possession and subsequent miraculous cures were also narrations of the empowerment of a group of pilgrims or a recovered individual. The empowerment might have been spiritual when experiencing the divine at the shrine. It was also social: the tribulations and subsequent recoveries reinforced or recreated personal or collective identities and the coherence of a community.

The performative space religion created was made real for oneself and for others by embodied practices. The body was not only a biological entity but also a cultural construction encompassing customs, practices, and beliefs of the era. Religion-as-lived was built upon corporeal experiences and a disorderly body was a core element of demonic possession. Demoniacs' bodies were read when being diagnosed, and narrations of these 'readings' were offered in the depositions. The 'language' of bodily practices and rituals may have been the only means to communicate thoughts and experiences of demonic presence. It seems that this kind of symbolic communication was more readily utilized and turned into acceptable depositions in the Southern parts of Christianity, especially in Italian urban areas. In Italian hagiography, both canonization processes and registers collected at a shrine, ritual responses to demonic possession, and mental or even physical disorders were more freely constructed than in the rest of Europe. In the Swedish material, for example, demonic presence does not seem to have been an independent interpretation of the laity; constraints set by the clergy determined the outcome. The alterity of the demoniac served the clergy's rhetorical purposes, not the needs or understanding of the lay participants.

Demonic possession was partially a gendered phenomenon and female corporeality was on occasion given as a reason for possession. Gendered aspects in possession and especially demonic presence in the female body reveal, however, a divergence between lay and clerical perceptions. In clerical rhetoric, the feminine and especially the female body could be linked with the diabolical: it was threatening, an inversion of normalcy merging with monstrosity. Its most threatening capacity was not necessarily the sinful flesh, but its very essence as being outside

male clerical control, thus having the potential for disorder and a capacity to contest hierarchy. These fears were revealed, for example, in the discussions of proper ritual practices. Arguing for demonic presence was part of a struggle on the part of the clergy to secure their own position and authority; it was targeted against the disorganization and chaos encapsulated in the female body. The interconnection of sexuality, femininity, and the diabolical was particularly visible when there were indications of copulation with demons. The clergy could have incorporated such narrative features to broadcast messages about social hierarchies and the sanctity of a local intercessor, but these cases, rare as they may have been, also testify to cultural anxieties. They reveal the suspicion felt towards inner spirituality, especially in cases of pious women. Inner spirituality was an intimate thing; it was ultimately out of others' control. When taken to extremes, spirituality could turn out to be its complete opposite: a mockery of piety and virtue.

Despite its physical and corporeal nature, demonic possession did not necessarily carry sexual implications. For the laity, the demoniac's body also represented disorder, but from their perspective, it was more a question of incapacity, of uselessness in meeting the requirements of making a livelihood and maintaining a family, than one of sin. The female body was ubiquitous and necessary for reproduction and the continuity of family and society; in daily negotiations it was not inevitably linked with the demonic. Life course and gendered expectations may, however, explain why women outnumber men as victims of demons. Women were more readily connected with the demonic in the minds of clerics, and lay participants may also have considered inverted gender attributes, like the inexplicable strength of a female demoniac, threatening. Furthermore, women's life course included more precarious changes. These liminal positions, such as menarche, marriage, pregnancy, and giving birth, caused problems; demonic presence could offer an outlet for fears and distress when something went wrong during these changes. Given that docility and meekness were components of idealized femininity, there were not many generally accepted opportunities for women to voice anger or aggression, and the 'language of the demonic' may have provided the only option for it. For the clergy, female corporeality was more readily both a sign of and a reason for impurity; for lay participants it was the fear of vulnerability rather than of impurity that was reflected in cases of demonic presence.

A clear distinction between the views of the clergy and laity about demonic presence cannot be deduced, and these spheres should not be seen as opposed to each other. Yet, there were differences between them, and they were most pronounced in relation to female sexuality or the hierarchical position of the clergy. Clericalization and nascent demonology in the early modern era may have pushed the divergence further: exorcisms became clerically ordained ceremonies and copulation with demons was equated with apostasy. For the laity, the demons may have continued to serve needs similar to those of earlier centuries, as the continuing existence of cases of demonic possession in miracle collections of less judicial rigour testifies.

The corporeal experiences upon which religion-as-lived was built were a unifying element cutting across various cultural and social spheres. The performative space religion created was made real for the individual and for the community by sensory elements, embodied signs, and bodily practices. The bodies of demoniacs were necessary for the interaction between the sacred and the diabolical. They became a battleground for supernatural forces, and their bodies and bodily functions, like vomiting, sneezing, or just sighing, manifested the exit of the malign spirit and triumph of the divine powers. The physical signs and sensory elements, sight, hear, or smell, certified the recovery and the victim's position as a former demoniac. These very mundane corporeal functions confirmed the sanctity of the local intercessor and the sacredness of the shrine. Demoniacs' gestures, symbols, and rituals became part of the sacralization process since the sacred and the diabolical were inseparably linked, and even necessary for each other's existence. The interaction between them was a crucial part of 'living out' religion.

The diabolical had many functions within the miraculous. Demonic possession was not only an emblem of powerlessness. It and the rituals associated with it were a way to manifest personal and communal subordination to a certain heavenly intercessor, an intercessor who was connected to the power struggles and political hierarchies of the area. Such cases also contained messages of lay, even women's, participation in the field of politics. They manifested political alliances and drew the boundaries of a cultic community and encircled oneself and one's community within that protective, divinely sanctioned sphere. The demonizing of political opponents, be they communes or individuals, reflects wider societal conflicts. Even if political relations and the means to handle them varied greatly within late medieval Europe, a unifying element seems to have been the function of demons in an identity-building processes. Demonic presence was used in constructing both the sacred and the political.

The tribulations of a demoniac, her or his bodily gestures, and the joint ritual response were details of significance expressed corporeally. The re-narration of their message at the interrogation (this time in verbal form) further emphasized the communal nature of the affliction and the interconnection of the sacred and the political, and the role of the diabolical in their making. In analysing the messages of these symbols and gestures, lived religion as a methodology offers a way to comprehend and to rethink the community's multifaceted interaction. Geographical differences offer a lens through which to focus on understanding the limits of the Church's universalizing discourse; in addition, these differences challenge strict categorizations concerning gender, the demonic, and even medieval Europe as a single, coherent unity. Possession cases display the way lay people used demons (and not vice versa) in identifying and dealing with uncertainties in their lives; demons were a device to explain and solve problems on a personal level, but they also offered a way to participate in communal negotiations, and enabled a contribution to the construction of society and culture.

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